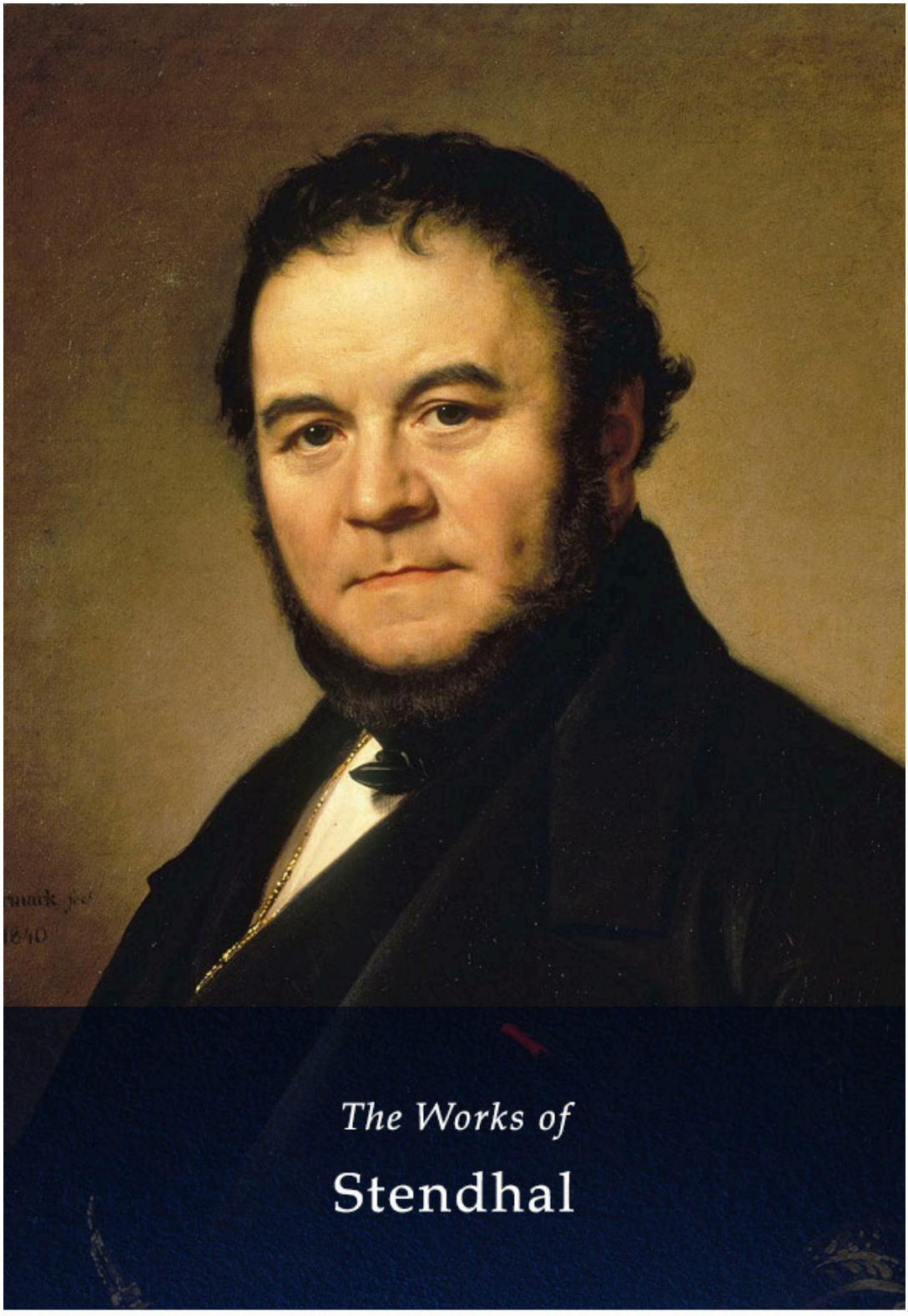

The Works of

Stendhal

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The Works of

STENDHAL

(1783–1842)

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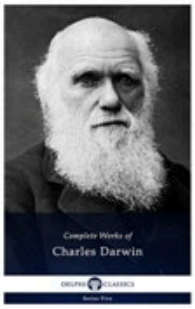

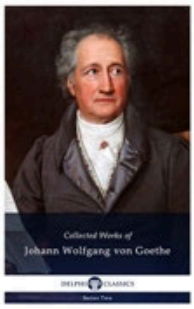

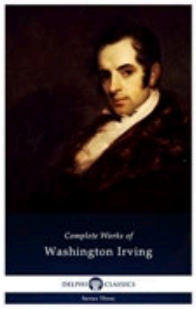

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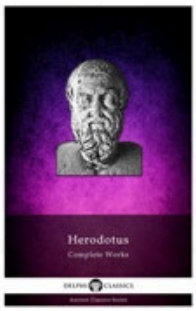

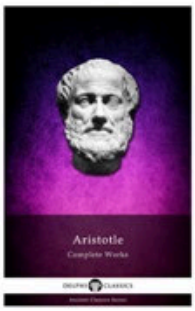

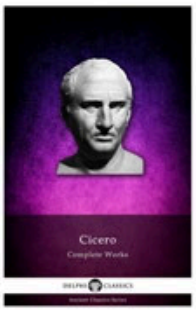

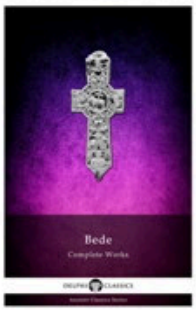

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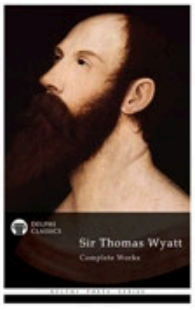

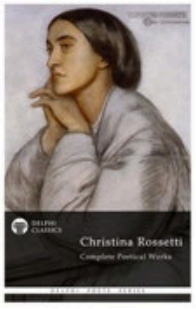

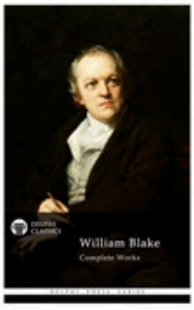

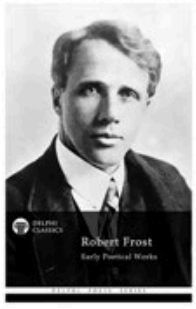

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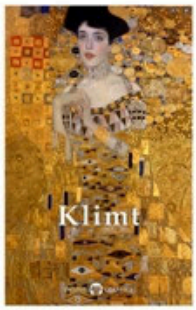

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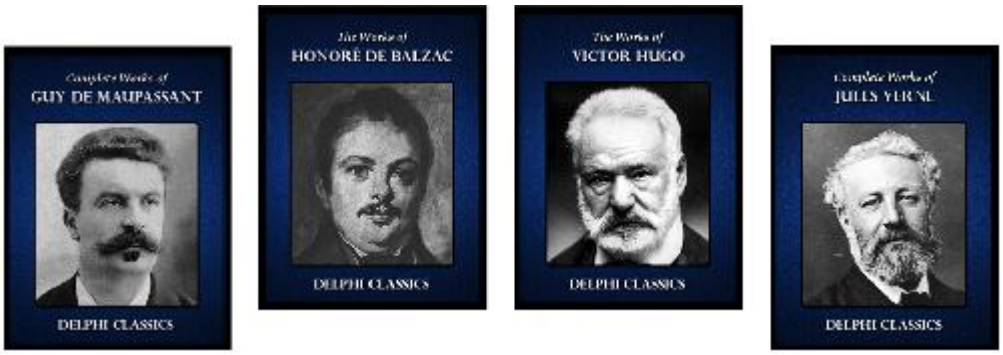

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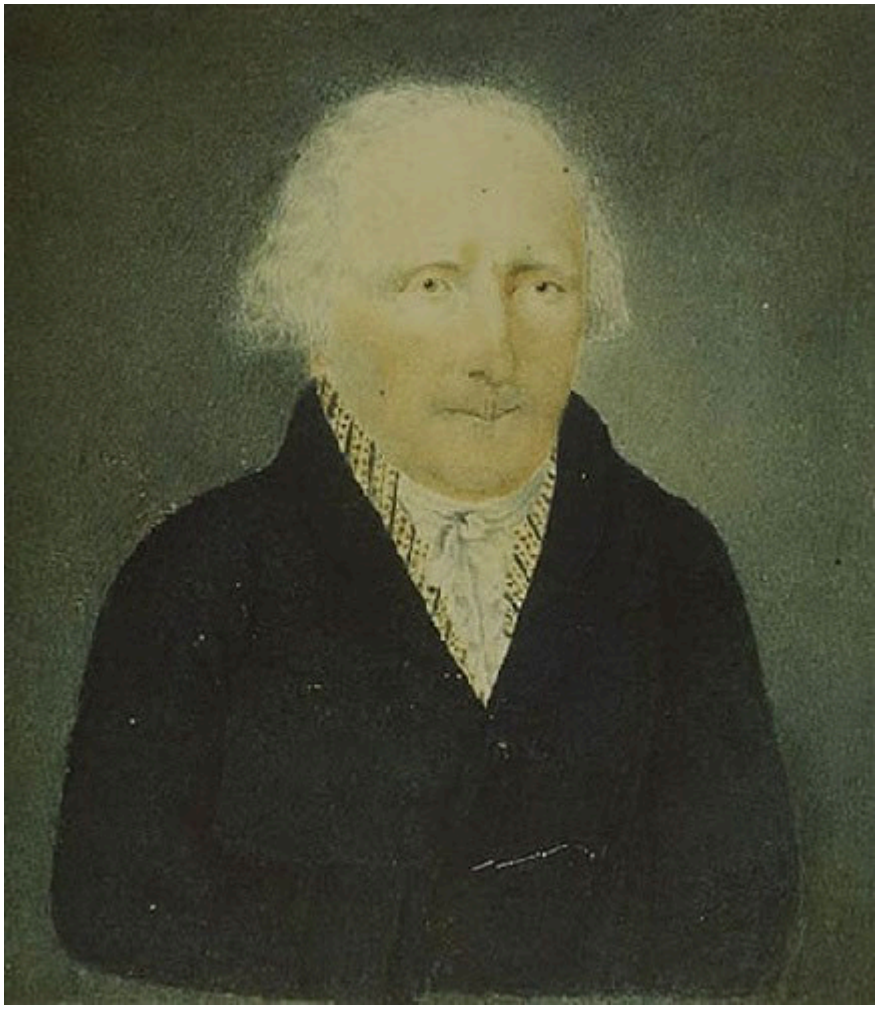
The Novels

Grenoble, Isère, Eastern France — Stendhal's birthplace

The plaque commemorating the birthplace



Chérubin Beyle, the father of Stendhal, was a lawyer

ARMANCE

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

First published anonymously in 1827, Armance is the first novel of French author Marie-Henri Beyle, better known by his pen name of ‘Stendhal’. A romance set during the Bourbon Restoration, it concerns Octave de Malivert, a taciturn, though brilliant young man scarcely out of the École Polytechnique. When Octave meets the beautiful Armance Zohiloff, he is at once captivated by her charms and she returns his feelings. The novel charts a series of misunderstandings, preventing the lovers from marrying, until, when they finally do unite, Octave is torn with jealousy when he believes the slanders of a rival, leading to a tragic end.

The novel is based on the theme of Olivier, a novel by the Duchess Claire de Duras, popular at the time of publication due to its controversial themes, which Stendhal implicitly refers to, without talking about openly to avoid censorship. The critic André Gide regarded Armance as the best of Stendhal’s works, praising the author’s accomplished depiction of having created a truly helpless lover.

Stendhal by Johan Olaf Sodermark, 1840

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The Scottish author Charles Kenneth Scott Moncrieff (1889-1930) translated all three of Stendhal's finished novels, as well as several of his short stories. Moncrieff is most famous for his English translation of most of Proust's 'À la recherche du temps perdu', which he published under the Shakespearean title 'Remembrance of Things Past'.

PREFACE

A woman of character, who has only a vague idea of what constitutes literary merit, has asked my unworthy self to correct the style of this novel. I am far from sharing certain political sentiments which seem to be blended with the narrative; so much I am obliged to explain to the reader. The talented author and I hold opposite views upon many subjects; but we have an equal horror of what are called applications. In London we find highly sensational novels: Grey, Almack's, High Life, Matilda and the like, which require a key. They are very good-natured caricatures of persons whom the accidents of birth or fortune have placed in an enviable position.

This is a kind of literary merit for which we have no desire. The author has not since l8l4 climbed the stair of the Tuileries; such is her pride that she does not know even the names of the persons who have doubtless made themselves conspicuous in a certain class of society.

But she has brought on the scene industrial magnates and privileged persons, she is therefore a satirist. If we were to ask for a description of the garden of the Tuileries from the doves that moan on the topmost branches of the trees, they would say: "It is a vast plain of verdure where one basks in the brightest sunshine. "We, who stroll beneath, would reply:"It is a delicious shady walk where one is sheltered from the heat, and above all from the glare of the sun, so trying in summer."

So it is that each of us judges everything from his own angle; equally incompatible are the expressions used of the present state of society by persons of equal respectability who intend to lead us by different paths to prosperity. But each party makes the other appear absurd.

Would you impute to an evil turn in the mind of the author the malicious and false descriptions that each party gives of the other's drawing-rooms? Would you insist that passionate people ought to be sage philosophers, that is to say, devoid of passion? In 1760, one required charm, wit, not overmuch humour,

nor overmuch honour, as the Regent said, in order to win the favour of master and mistress.

It requires economy, stubborn toil, solidity, a brain free from any illusion to make anything out of the steam engine. This is the difference between the age that ended in 1789 and the age that began about 1815.

Napoleon, on his way to Russia, used constantly to hum the words he had heard so well rendered by Porto (in La Molinara):

Si batte nel mio cuore

L'inchiostro e la farina.

[Shall I become a miller or a lawyer? . . .]

They are words that many young men might repeat who are endowed at once with good birth and with intelligence.

In speaking of our age, we find that we have sketched in outline two of the principal characters in the following story. There are perhaps not a score of pages in it that run the risk of appearing satirical; but the author follows another path; the age is gloomy, out of temper; and one has to handle it with caution, even when publishing a pamphlet which, as I have already told the author, will be forgotten in six months at the latest, like the best works of its kind.

In the meantime, we beg for a little of the indulgence that has been shown to the authors of the comedy, Les Trois Quartiers. They have held up a mirror to the public; is it their fault if ugly people have passed in front of that mirror? Does a mirror take sides?

The reader will find in the style of this novel artless forms of speech, which I have not had the courage to alter. Nothing is more tedious to my mind than Teutonic and romantic emphasis. The author said: "Too zealous a search for

noble turns of speech ends by producing an admirable dryness; they make one read a single page with pleasure; but this precious charm makes one shut the book at the end of the chapter: and we wish our readers to read any number of chapters. Spare me, therefore, my rustic or bourgeois simplicity."

Remark that the author would be in despair if she thought that I considered her style bourgeois. There is an unbounded pride in her heart. It is the heart of a woman who would feel ten years older were her name made public. Besides, the subject! . . .

STENDHAL.

ST. GINGOUF, July 23, 1827.

CHAPTER ONE

It is old and plain . . .

It is silly sooth

And dallies with the

innocence of love.

TWELFTH NIGHT, Act II.

On his twentieth birthday, Octave had just left the École Polytechnique. His father, the Marquis de Malivert, wished to keep his only son in Paris. As soon as Octave understood that this was the constant desire of a father whom he respected, and of his mother whom he loved with an almost passionate love, he abandoned his intention of entering the Artillery. He would have liked to spend a few years in a regiment, and then resign his commission until the next war, in which he was equally ready to serve as Lieutenant or with the rank of Colonel. This is typical of the eccentricities which made him odious to the common run of humanity.

Plenty of brains, a tall figure, refined manners, the handsomest great dark eyes in the world, would have assured Octave a place among the most distinguished young men in society, had not a certain sombre air, imprinted in those gentle eyes, led people to pity rather than to envy him. He would have created a sensation had he been in the habit of talking; but Octave desired nothing, nothing appeared to cause him either pain or pleasure. Frequently ill in his childhood, ever since vital energy had assumed control of his organism he had always been observed to submit without hesitation to what seemed to him to be prescribed by duty; but it might have been thought that, if Duty had not made her voice heard, he would not have had, in himself, sufficient impulse to make him act. Perhaps some singular

principle, deeply impressed upon his youthful heart, and incompatible with the events of real life, as he saw them develop round about him, led him to portray to himself in too sombre colours both his own future and his relations with his fellow men. Whatever the cause of his profound melancholy, Octave seemed to have turned misanthrope before his time. Commander de Soubirane, his uncle, said one day in his presence that the boy's nature alarmed him. "Why should I appear other than what I am?" was Octave's cold reply. "Your nephew will always keep to the line of reason." "But never rise above or fall below it," retorted the Commander with his Provençal vivacity; "from which I conclude that if you are not the Messiah expected by the Hebrews, you are Lucifer in person, come back to this world on purpose to worry me. What the devil are you? I can't make you out; you are duty incarnate." "How happy I should be never to fail in my duty!" said Octave; "how I wish I could render up my soul pure to my Creator, as I received it from Him!" "A miracle!" exclaimed the Commander; "in the last twelvemonth, this is the first wish I have seen spring from a heart frozen stiff with purity." And in order not to spoil the effect of this utterance, the Commander hastily left the room.

Octave looked tenderly at his mother; she knew whether his heart was indeed frozen. It might be said of Madame de Malivert that she had remained young although approaching her fiftieth birthday. It was not only that she was still beautiful; she had, together with an exceptionally sharp intellect, retained a keen and active sympathv with her friends' interests, including the joys and sorrows of young men. She entered naturally into their reasons for hope or fear; and soon seemed to be hoping or fearing herself. This kind of character has lost its charm now that public opinion seems to have made it almost obligatory upon women of a certain age who are not religious; but there was never the least trace of affectation in Madame de Malivert.

Her servants had observed for some time past that she was in the habit of driving out in a hackney carriage; and often, when she came home, she was not alone. Saint–Jean, an inquisitive old footman, who had accompanied his employers during the emigration, tried to discover who a certain man was whom Madame de Malivert had more than once brought home with her. On the first occasion, Saint–Jean lost sight of the stranger in the crowd; at his second attempt, his curiosity was more successful; he saw the person whom

he was following pass into the Charity Hospital, where he learned from the porter that the stranger was none other than the famous Doctor Duquerrel. Madame de Malivert's household discovered that their mistress was bringing to the house in turn all the most eminent doctors in Paris, and almost always she found an excuse for letting them see her son.

Struck by the eccentricities which she remarked in Octave, she feared lest his lungs might be affected; but she believed that, were she unfortunately to have been right in her diagnosis, naming that cruel malady would be tantamount to hastening its advance. Doctors, who were men of intelligence, assured Madame de Malivert that her son was suffering from no malady beyond that sort of dissatisfied and critical melancholy characteristic of the young men of his generation and position; but they warned her that she herself ought to pay the closest attention to her lungs. These dread tidings were divulged to the household by a régime which had to be enforced; and M. de Malivert, from whom a vain attempt was made to conceal the name of the malady, foresaw the possibility of being left alone in his old age.

Extremely rich and extravagant before the Revolution, the Marquis de Malivert, who had not set foot again in France until 1814, in the train of his monarch, found himself reduced by the confiscations to an income of twenty or thirty thousand livres. He thought himself a beggar. The sole occupation of a mind that had never been any too powerful was now to seek a bride for Octave. But, being still more faithful to his code of honour than to the obsession that was tormenting him, the old Marquis de Malivert never failed to begin the overtures that he made in society with these words: "I can offer a good name, a certain pedigree from the Crusade of Louis the Young, and I know of but thirteen families in Paris that can hold up their heads and say that; but otherwise, I see myself reduced to starvation, to begging my bread; I am a pauper."

This view of life in an elderly man is not calculated to give rise to that meek and philosophic resignation which makes old age cheerful; and but for the outbursts of Commander de Soubirane, a slightly mad and distinctly malicious Southerner, the house in which Octave lived would have been conspicuous, even in the Faubourg Saint–Germain, for its gloom. Madame de Malivert, whom nothing could distract from her anxiety as to her son's health, not even the thought of her own peril, took advantage of the delicate

state in which she found herself to cultivate the society of two famous doctors. She sought to win their friendship. As these gentlemen were, one the leader, the other one of the most fervent adherents, of two rival sects, their discussions, albeit of a subject so gloomy to any one who is not animated by an interest in science and in the solution of the problem that faces him, were sometimes amusing to Madame de Malivert, who had not lost a keen and curious mind. She led them on to talk, and thanks to them, now and again at least, voices were raised in the drawing-room, so nobly furnished and yet so sombre, of the Hôtel de Malivert.

Its hangings of green velvet, surcharged with gilded ornaments, seemed to have been put there on purpose to absorb all the light that might come in through two huge windows, the original panes of which had been replaced by plate glass. These windows gave upon a deserted garden, divided into irregular compartments by box hedges. A row of limes, trimmed regularly three times in the year, bounded its farther end, and their motionless shapes seemed a living image of the private lives of the family. The young Vicomte's bedroom, which stood above the drawing-room and had been sacrificed to the beauty of that essential apartment, was barely the height of a half-landing. This room was the bane of Octave's life, and a score of times, in his parents' hearing, he had sung its praises. He lived in dread lest some involuntary exclamation should betray him and reveal how intolerable this room and the whole house were to him.

He keenly regretted his little cell at the Ecole Polytechnique. His time there had been precious to him because it offered him the semblance of the retirement and calm of a monastery. For a long time Octave had had thoughts of withdrawing from the world and of consecrating his life to God. This idea had alarmed his family, especially the Marquis, who saw in the project the fulfilment of all his fears of the abandonment which he dreaded in his old age. But in seeking a closer knowledge of the truths of religion, Octave had been led to study the writers who for the last two centuries have tried to explain the nature of human thought and will, and his ideas had changed considerably; his father's had not changed at all. The Marquis, who had a horror of books and lawyers, was aghast to see this young man shew a passion for reading; he was constantly afraid of some scandal or other, and this was one of his principal reasons for wishing an early marriage for Octave.

While they were basking in the fine days of late autumn, which, in Paris, is like spring, Madame de Malivert said to her son: “You ought to go out riding.” Octave saw nothing in this suggestion but an additional expense, and as his father’s incessant lamentations made him suppose the family fortune to be far more reduced than it actually was, he held out for a long time. “What is the use, dear Mama,” was his invariable reply; “I am quite a tolerable horseman, but riding gives me no pleasure.” Madame de Malivert added to the stable a superb English horse, the youth and beauty of which formed a strange contrast to the pair of old Norman horses which for the last twelve years had sufficed for the needs of the household. Octave was embarrassed by this present; the neixt two days he spent in thanking his mother for it; but on the third, happening to be alone with her, when their conversation turned to the English horse: “I love you too well to thank you again,” he said, taking Madame de Malivert’s hand and pressing it to his lips. “Is your son, for once in his life, to be wanting in sincerity towards the person he loves most in the world? This horse is worth 4,000 francs; you are not rich enough to be able to spend so much money without feeling the want of it.”

Madame de Malivert opened the drawer of a writing desk. “Here is my will,” she said; “I have left you my diamonds, but upon the express condition that as long as the money you receive from the sale of them shall last, you shall have a horse which you are to ride now and again by my order. I have sold two of the diamonds secretly to give myself the pleasure of seeing you on a fine horse in my lifetime. One of the greatest sacrifices your father has imposed on me has been his making me promise not to part with these ornaments which become me so ill. He has some political expectation, which to my mind rests upon a very slender basis, and he would think himself twice as poor and twice as decayed on the day when his wife no longer had her diamonds.”

A profound melancholy appeared on Octave’s brow, and he replaced in the drawer of the desk that document the name of which reminded him of so painful, perhaps so imminent an event. He took his mother’s hand again, and held it in both his own, a display of feeling which he rarely allowed himself. “Your father’s plans,” Madame de Malivert went on, “depend upon that Bill of Indemnity of which we have been hearing for the last three years.” “I hope with all my heart that it may be rejected,” said Octave. “And why,” his

mother Went on, delighted to see him shew animation at anything and give her this proof of his esteem and affection, “why should you wish to see it rejected?” “In the first place, because, not being comprehensive, it seems to me to be scarcely just; secondly, because it will mean my marrying. I have the misfortune to have a peculiar nature, I did not create myself so; all that I have been able to do has been to know myself. Except at those moments when I have the happiness of being alone with you, my one pleasure in life consists in living in complete isolation, where not a living soul has the right to address me.” “Dear Octave, this singular taste is the result of your inordinate passion for learning; your studies make me tremble; you will end like Goethe’s Faust. Are you prepared to swear to me, as you did on Sunday, that your reading is not confined to very bad books?” “I read the books that you have indicated to me, dear Mama, at the same time as those which are called bad books.” “Ah! There is something mysterious and sombre about you which makes me shudder; heaven only knows what you derive from all this reading!” “Dear Mama, I cannot refuse to believe in the truth of what seems to me to be true. How could an all-powerful and good Being punish me for placing my faith in the evidence of the organs with which He Himself has furnished me?” “Ah! I am alwavs afraid of angering that terrible Being,” said Madame de Malivert with tears in her eyes; “He may take you out of reach of my love. There are days when after reading Bourdaloue I am frozen with terror. I find in the Bible that that all-powerful Being is pitiless in His vengeance, and you are doubtless offending Him when you read the philosophers of the eighteenth century. I confess to you, the day before yesterday, I came out of Saint–Thomas d’Aquin in a state bordering on despair. Though the anger of the All–Powerful with impious books were but the tenth part of what M. l’Abbé Fay —— —— preaches, I might still be afraid of losing you. There is an abominable journal which M. l’Abbé Fay —— —— durst not even name in his sermon, and which you read every day, I am sure.” “Yes, Mama, I do read it, but I am faithful to the promise I gave you; immediately afterwards I read the paper whose doctrine is diametrically opposed to it.”

“Dear Octave, it is the violence of your passions that alarms me, and above all the course that they are secretly tracing in your heart. If I saw in you any of the tastes natural at your age, to provide a diversion from your singular ideas, I should be less alarmed. But you read impious books, and presently you will begin to doubt the very existence of God. Why reflect upon these

terrible subjects? Do you recall your passion for chemistry? For eighteen months you refused to see anybody, you estranged by your absence our nearest relatives; you failed in the most essential duties." "My interest in chemistry," replied Octave, "was not a passion, it was a duty that I set myself; and heaven knows," he added with a sigh, "whether I should not have done better, by remaining faithful to that plan and making myself a man of learning withdrawn from the world, by following the example of Newton!"

That evening Octave remained with his mother until one o'clock. In vain had she urged him to go out to some social gathering, or at least to the play. "I stay where I feel most happy," said Octave. "There are moments when I believe you, and those are when I am with you," was his delighted mother's answer; "but if for two days on end I have seen you only with other people, my better judgment prevails. It is impossible that such solitude can be good for a boy of your age. I have diamonds here worth 74,000 francs lying idle, and likely to remain so for long, since you shew no intention of marrying; and indeed you are very young, twenty and five days!" here Madame de Malivert rose from her couch to kiss her son. "I have a good mind to sell these useless diamonds, I shall invest what I receive for them, and the interest I shall employ in increasing my expenditure; I should fix a day, and, on the plea of my feeble health, I should be at home to those people only to whom you had no objection." "Alas, dear Mama, the sight of all my fellow créatures depresses me equally; I care for no one in the world but you. . . ."

When her son had left her, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, Madame de Malivert, troubled by sinister forebodings, was unable to sleep. She tried in vain to forget how dear Octave was to her, and to judge him as she would have judged a stranger. Invariably, instead of following a line of reason, her mind went astray among romantic suppositions as to her son's future; the Commanderas saying recurred to her. "Certainly," she said, "I feel in him something superhuman; he lives like a creature apart, separated from the rest of mankind." Then reverting to more reasonable ideas, Madame de Malivert could not conceive her son's having the liveliest or at least the most exalted passions, and at the same time such an absence of inclination for everything that was real in life. One would have said that his passions had their source elsewhere and rested upon nothing that exists here below. Everything about Octave, even his noble features, alarmed his mother; his fine and tender eyes

filled her with terror. They seemed at times to be gazing into heaven and reflecting the bliss that they saw there. A moment later, one read in them the torments of the damned.

One feels a modest reluctance to question a person whose happiness appears so fragile, and his mother often gazed at him without venturing to address him. In his calmer moments, Octave's eyes seemed to be dreaming of an absent happiness; you would have called him a tender heart kept at a great distance from the sole object of its affections. Octave was sincere in his answers to the questions with which his mother plied him, and yet she could not solve the mystery of that profound and often agitated distraction. From his fifteenth year, Octave had been like this, and Madame de Malivert had never thought seriously of any secret passion. Was not Octave master of himself and of his fortune?

She constantly observed that the realities of life, so far from being a source of emotion to her son, had no other effect than to make him lose patience, as though they came to distract him and to tear him in an aggravating fashion from his beloved musings. Apart from the misfortune of this manner of life which seemed to alienate him from his whole environment, Madame de Malivert could not fail to recognise in Octave a strong and upright mind, spirited and honourable. But this mind knew very well the justice of its claim to independence and liberty, and his noble qualities formed a strange alliance with a profundity of dissimulation incredible in a boy of his age. This cruel reality destroyed in an instant all the dreams of happiness which had brought calm to Madame de Malivert's imagination.

Nothing was more irritating to her son, one might say, more odious, for he was incapable of loving or hating by halves, than the society of his uncle the Commander, and yet every one in the household believed that he liked nothing better than to be M. de Soubirane's adversary at chess, or to saunter with him on the boulevard. This was a favourite expression with the Commander, who for all his sixty years had still quite as many pretensions as in 1789; only the fatuity of argument and profundity had taken the place of the affectations of youth, which have at least the excuse of charm and gaiety. This instance of so ready a dissimulation frightened Madame de Malivert. "I have questioned my son as to the pleasure he finds in his uncle's company, and he has told me the truth; but," she said to herself, "who knows

whether some strange design may not be lurking in that singular heart? And if I never put any questions to him about the matter, it will never occur to him to speak to me of it. I am a simple woman," Madame de Malivert told herself, "my vision extends only to a few trivial duties within my range. How could I ever dare to think myself capable of giving advice to so strong and singular a creature? I have no friend to consult, endowed with a sufficiently superior judgment; besides, how can I betray Octave's confidence; have I not promised him absolute secrecy?"

When these melancholy reflexions had disturbed her until daybreak, Madame de Malivert concluded, as was her custom, that she ought to employ such influence as she had over her son to make him go frequently to visit Madame la Marquise de Bonnivet. This was her intimate friend and cousin, a woman of the highest position, in whose drawing-room were constantly to be found all the most distinguished elements of society. "My business," Madame de Malivert told herself, "is to pay court to the persons of merit whom I meet at Madame de Bonnivet's, and so find out what they think of Octave." People went to this house to seek the pleasure of being numbered among Madame de Bonnivet's friends, and the support of her husband, a practised courtier burdened with years and honours, and almost as much prized by his master as was that delightful Admiral de Bonnivet, his ancestor, who made François I do so many foolish things and punished himself for them so nobly.

[At the battle of Pavia, towards nightfall, seeing that all was lost, the Admiral cried: "Never shall it be said that I survived such a disaster"; and charging with raised visor into the midst of the enemy, had the consolation of killing a number of them before he himself fell pierced by many wounds (February 24, 1525).]

CHAPTER TWO

Melancholy mark'd him for her own,

whose ambitious heart overrates

the happiness he cannot enjoy.

MARLOW.

[The first of these lines is taken from the Epitaph in Gray's Elegy, in the notes to which it is not shewn as an "Imitation." The ascription of the whole passage to Marlow (sic) is probably, therefore, one of Beyle's fantasies. — C. K. S. M.]

The following morning, at eight o'clock, a great upheaval occurred in the household of Madame de Malivert. All the bells pealed at once. Presently the old Marquis paid a visit to his wife, who was still in bed; he himself had wasted no time in dressing. He came and embraced her with tears in his eyes, "My dear," he said to her, "we shall see our grandchildren before we die," and the good old man wept copious tears. "God knows," he added, "that it is not the thought of ceasing to be a beggar that makes me like this. . . . The Bill of Indemnity is certain to pass, and you are to have two millions." At this moment Octave, for whom the Marquis had sent, knocked at the door; his father rose and flung himself into his arms. Octave saw tears which he perhaps misinterpreted, for an almost imperceptible flush appeared on his pale cheeks. "Draw back the curtains; give me daylight!" said his mother in a tone of vivacity. "Come here, look at me," she added, in the same tone, and, without replying to her husband, examined the imperceptible flush which was dyeing the upper part of Octave's cheeks. She knew, from her conversations with the doctors, that a circular patch of red on the cheeks is a symptom of weak lungs; she trembled for her son's health and gave no more thought to the two millions of the indemnity.

When Madame de Malivert was reassured, “Yes, my son,” the Marquis said at length, slightly out of patience with all this fuss, “I have just heard for certain that the Bill of Indemnity is to be introduced, and we can count upon 319 certain votes out of 420. Your mother has lost a fortune which I reckon at more than six millions, and whatever may be the sacrifices which the fear of the Jacobins may impose upon the King’s justice, we may safely count upon two millions. And so I am no longer a beggar, that is to say, you are no longer a beggar, your fortune will once again be in keeping with your birth, and I am now in a position to seek, instead of begging a bride for you.” “But, my dear,” said Madame de Malivert, “take care that your haste to believe this great news does not expose you to the petty criticisms of our cousin Madame la Duchesse d’Ancre and her friends. She already has all the millions that you promise us; don’t count your chickens before they are hatched.” “For the last five and twenty minutes,” said the old Marquis, taking out his watch, “I have been certain, yes, you may say certain, that the Bill of Indemnity will be passed.”

The Marquis must have been right, for that evening, when the impassive Octave appeared in Madame de Bonnivet’s drawing-room, he found a trace of eagerness in the welcome which he received on all sides.

There was also a trace of pride in his manner of responding to this sudden interest; so at least the old Duchesse d’Ancre remarked. Octave’s impression was one of aversion combined with scorn. He found himself greeted more warmly, because of the prospect of two millions, in Parisian society, and among the people with whom he had been on most intimate terms. His ardent spirit, as just and almost as severe towards others as towards himself, ended by extracting a profound melancholy from this sad truth. It was not that Octave’s pride stooped to resentment of the people whom chance had brought together in this drawing-room; he was filled with pity for his own lot and for that of all mankind. “I am so little loved, then,” he said to himself, “that two millions alter all the feelings that people had for me; instead of seeking to deserve their love, I ought to have tried to enrich myself by some form of trade.” As he made these gloomy reflexions, Octave happened to be seated upon a divan, facing a little chair which was occupied by Armance de Zohi-loff, his cousin, and by accident his eyes came to rest upon her. It occurred to him that she had not uttered a word to him all that evening. Armance was a niece, in reduced circumstances, of Mesdames de

Bonnivet and de Malivert, of about the same age as Octave, and as these two young people were quite indifferent to one another, they were in the habit of conversing with entire frankness. For three-quarters of an hour Octave's heart had been steeped in bitterness, an idea now struck him: "Armance pays me no compliment, she alone of the people here is untouched by this increased interest which I owe to money, she alone here has some nobility of soul." And he found some consolation merely in looking at Armance. "So here at last is a creature worthy of respect," he said to himself, and as the evening advanced, he saw with a pleasure equal to the grief which at first had flooded his heart that she continued to refrain from addressing him.

Once only, when a provincial, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, was paying Octave an ill-turned compliment with regard to the two millions which he was going to vote him (these were the man's own words), Octave caught a glance from Armance directed at himself. Her expression was one that it was impossible to misinterpret; so at least Octave's judgment, more severe than could well be imagined, decided; this glance was intended to study him, and (what gave him a perceptible feeling of pleasure) seemed to expect to be obliged to despise him. The Deputy who was preparing to vote millions received no quarter from Octave; the young Vicomte's scorn was all too visible even to a provincial. "They are all the same," said the Deputy from the —— —— Department to Commander de Soubirane whom he joined a moment later. "Ah, you fine noblemen of the Court, if we could vote our own indemnities without passing yours, you should not touch a penny, begad, until you had given us guarantees. We have no wish now, as in the old days, to see you colonels at three and twenty and ourselves captains at forty. Of the 319 Deputies who are on the right side, 212 of us belong to that provincial nobility which was sacrificed in the past. . . . " The Commander, highly flattered at hearing such a complaint addressed to himself, began to make excuses for the people of quality. This conversation, which M. de Soubirane in his self-importance called political, lasted for the rest of the evening, and, notwithstanding the most piercing north wind, took place in the bay of a window, the position prescribed for talking politics.

The Commander deserted his post for a minute only, after begging the Deputy to excuse him and to wait for him there. "I must go and ask my nephew what he has done with my carriage," and he went and whispered to Octave: "Talk, people are remarking on your silence; pride is the last thing

you should shew at this change of fortune. Remember that these two millions are a restitution and nothing more. Keep your pride till the King gives you a Blue Riband." And the Commander returned to his window, running like a boy, and muttering to himself: "Ah! At half-past eleven, the carriage."

Octave began to talk, and if he did not arrive at the ease and sprightliness which make for complete success, his astonishing good looks and the intense earnestness of his manner made a number of the women present attach an uncommon value to what he said to them. It is true that the noble simplicity with which he uttered his words spoiled the effect of several piquant sallies; it was only after a moment or two that his hearers felt surprise. His proud nature never allowed him to utter in an emphatic tone what he thought effective. His was one of those minds which their natural pride places in the position of a girl who appears without rouge in a drawing-room where the use of rouge is general; for the first few minutes her pallor makes her appear sad. If Octave met with success, it was because the place of the nimble wit and excitement which he often lacked was filled that evening by a sentiment of the bitterest irony.

This semblance of malice led the women of a certain age to pardon him the simplicity of his manners, and the fools whom he frightened made haste to applaud him. Octave, delicately expressing all the contempt that was devouring him, was tasting the only happiness that society could give him, when the Duchesse d'Ancre came up to the divan upon which he was seated and said, not to him but for his benefit, and in the lowest of tones, to her dearest friend Madame de la Ronze: "Look at that little fool Armance, she has actually taken it into her head to be jealous of the fortune that has fallen from the clouds at M. de Malivert's feet. Lord! How ill envy becomes a woman!" Her friend guessed the Duchesse's meaning, and caught the fixed stare of Octave who, while appearing to see nothing but the venerable face of the Bishop of —— —— who was talking to him at the moment, had heard all. In less than three minutes, Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's silence was explained, and she herself proved guilty, in Octave's mind, of all the base feelings of which she had been accused. "Great God," he said to himself, "there is no exception, then, to the baseness of feeling of all this set! And what grounds have I for supposing that other sets are in any way different? If people dare to flaunt such a worship of money in one of the most exclusive

drawing-rooms in France, among people, none of whom can open the History of France without coming upon a hero of his own name, what can it be like among the wretched merchants, who are millionaires today, but whose fathers only yesterday were behind the counter? God, how vile men are!"

Octave fled from Madame de Bonnivet's drawing-room; the fashionable world filled him with horror. He left the family carriage for his uncle the Commander and returned home on foot. It was raining in torrents; the rain delighted him. Soon he had ceased to notice the regular tempest that was meanwhile flooding Paris. "The one resource against this general degradation," he thought, "would be to find a noble soul, not yet debased by the sham wisdom of the Duchesse d'Ancre and all her kind, to cling to her forever, to see no one but her, to live with her and solely for her and for her happiness. I should love her passionately. . . . I should love her! Wretch that I am!" At this moment a carriage turning at a gallop from the Rue de Poitiers into the Rue de Bourbon almost ran over Octave. The back wheel struck him violently in the chest and tore his waistcoat: he stood rooted to the ground; the vision of death had cooled his blood.

"God! Why was I not crushed out of existence?" he said, looking up to heaven. Nor did the rain that was falling in torrents make him bow his head; this cold rain did him good. It was only some minutes later that he proceeded on his way. He ran upstairs to his own room, changed his clothes, and inquired whether his mother were visible. But as she did not expect him she had gone early to bed. Left to his own company, he found everything tedious, even the sombre Alfieri, one of whose tragedies he attempted to read. For a long time he paced the floor of his vast and low apartment. Finally, "Why not make an end of it all?" he asked himself; "why this obstinate resistance to the fate that is crushing me? It is all very well my forming what are apparently the most reasonable plans of conduct, my life is nothing but a succession of griefs and bitter feelings. This month is no better than the last; this year is no better than last year. Why this obstinate determination to go on living? Can I be wanting in firmness? What is death?" he asked himself, opening his case of pistols and examining them. "A very small matter, when all is said; only a fool would be concerned about it. My mother, my poor mother, is dying of consumption; a little time, and I must follow her. I may even precede her if life is too bitter a grief for me.

Were it possible to ask such a favour, she would grant it. . . . The Commander, my father himself do not care for me; they value the name I bear; they cherish in me an excuse for ambition. It is a very minor duty that binds me to them. . . . " This word duty came like a thunderbolt to Octave. "A minor duty!" he cried, coming to a halt, "a duty of little importance! . . . Is it of little importance, if it is the only duty I have left? If I do not overcome the difficulties that chance presents to me here and now, what right have I to assume that I am certain of conquering all those that it may one day present to me? What! I have the pride to imagine myself superior to every danger, to every sort of evil that may attack a man, and yet I beg the grief that presents itself to choose a form that will suit me, that is to say, to diminish its force by half. What pettiness! And I thought myself so strong! I was nothing but a presumptuous fool."

>From seeing things in this new light to making a vow to overcome the grief of living took only a moment. Soon the disgust which Octave felt at everything became less violent, and he felt himself to be not such a wretched creature. His heart, weighed down and disorganised to some extent by so prolonged an absence of all happiness, regained a little life and courage with the happiness of self-esteem. Ideas of another sort presented themselves. The lowness of the ceiling of his room displeased him intensely; he felt envious of the magnificent saloon of the Hôtel de Bonnivet. "It is at least twenty feet high," he said to himself, "how freely I should breathe in it! Ah!" he exclaimed with the glad surprise of a child, "there is a use for these millions. I shall have a magnificent saloon like the one in the Hôtel de Bonnivet; and only I shall set foot in it. Once a month, at the most, yes, on the first day of the month, a servant to dust it, but in my presence; he must not try to read my thoughts from my selection of books, nor to pry into what I write down for my soul's guidance in its moments of folly. . . . I shall carry the key always on my watch-chain, a tiny, invisible key of steel, smaller than the key of a portfolio. I shall choose for my saloon three mirrors, each seven feet high. I have always liked that sombre and splendid form of decoration. What is the size of the largest mirrors they make at Saint–Gobain?" And the man who, for the last three-quarters of an hour, had been thinking of ending his life, sprang at once upon a chair to look on his shelves for the price-list of the Saint–Gobain mirrors. He spent an hour in writing out an estimate of the cost of his saloon. He felt that he was behaving like a child; but went on writing all the more rapidly and seriously. This task performed, and the

estimate checked, which brought up to 57,350 francs the cost of raising the ceiling of his bedroom and installing a saloon in its place. “If this be not counting one’s chickens,” he said to himself with a laugh, “I should like to know what is. . . . Oh, well! I am a miserable wretch!” he went on, striding up and down the room. “Yes, I am a miserable wretch; but I will be stronger than my misery. I shall measure my strength against it, and I shall be the master. Brutus sacrificed his children; that was the difficulty that faced him; as for me, I shall continue to live.” He wrote down on a little tablet concealed in the secret drawer of his desk: “December l4th, 182 — . Pleasing effect of two m. — Increase of friendliness. — Envy on the part of Ar. — To make an end. — I will be the master. — Saint–Gobain mirrors.”

This bitter reflexion was written down in Greek characters. Next he picked out on his piano a whole act of Don Giovanni, and those sombre chords of Mozart restored peace to his soul.

CHAPTER THREE

As the most forward bud Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,

Even so by love the young and tender wit

Is turned to folly. . . .

. . . . So eating love

Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, Act I.

It was not only at night and when alone that Octave was seized by these fits of despair. An extreme violence, an extraordinary spitefulness, marked all his actions at such times, and doubtless, had he been merely a poor law student without family or friends, he would have been locked up as a madman. But in that rank of society he would have had no opportunity of acquiring that elegance of manners which, adding a final polish to so singular a character, made him a being apart, even in court circles. Octave was indebted to some extent for this extreme distinction to the expression of his features; it was strong and gentle, and not strong and hard, as we see in the majority of men who are conscious of their good looks. He was naturally endowed with the difficult art of communicating his thoughts, whatever they might be, without ever giving offence, or rather without ever giving unnecessary offence, and thanks to this perfect restraint in the ordinary relations of life, the idea of his being mad never suggested itself.

It was less than a year since, seeing that a young footman, alarmed by the expression on his face, appeared to bar his way, one evening as he came running out of his mother's drawing-room, Octave in a fury had cried: "Who are you to stand up to me! If you are strong, shew your strength." And so saying he had seized him round the body and flung him out of the window.

The footman landed upon a potted oleander in the garden, without serious injury to himself. For the next two months Octave appointed himself the man's body servant; in the end he gave him far too much money, and every day devoted several hours to his education. The whole family being anxious that this man should keep silence, presents were given him, and he found himself the object of excessive attentions which made him a nuisance who had to be sent back to his home with a pension. The reader can now understand Madame de Malivert's anxiety.

What had alarmed her most of all at the time of this unfortunate event was that Octave's repentance, albeit extreme, had not begun until the following day. That night, as he returned home, some one having happened to mention to him the danger the man had incurred: "He is young," had been his comment, "why did he not defend himself? When he tried to prevent me from passing, did I not tell him to defend himself?" Madame de Malivert thought she had discovered that these furious outbursts came over her son at the very moments in which he appeared to have most completely forgotten those sombre musings which she could always discern from his expression. It was, for instance, halfway through the performance of a charade, when he had been acting merrily for an hour with several young men and five or six young persons with whom he was intimately acquainted, that he had fled from the drawing-room and hurled the servant out of the window.

Some months before the evening of the two millions, Octave had made almost as abrupt an exit from a ball that Madame de Bonnivet was giving. He had figured with remarkable grace in several country-dances and valses. His mother was delighted with his success, and he himself could not be unaware of it; a number of women for whom their beauty had earned a great celebrity in society, came up and spoke to him with the most flattering air. His hair, of the most beautiful gold, falling in heavy curls over a brow that was really superb, had particularly impressed the celebrated Madame de Claix. And in speaking of the fashions followed by the young men of Naples, where she had just been, she was paying him a marked compliment, when suddenly Octave's face flushed a deep crimson, and he left the room at a pace the swiftness of which he sought in vain to hide. His mother, in alarm, went after him but did not find him. She waited in vain for him all night long; he appeared only the next morning, and in a strange state; he had received three sabre-cuts, which, to tell the truth, were not serious. The

doctors were of opinion that this monomania was entirely moral (to use their expression), and must be due not to any physical cause, but to the influence of some singular idea. There was no warning signal of M. le Vicomte Octave's migraines, as they were called. These outbursts had been far more common during his first year at the Ecole Polytechnique, and before he had thought of becoming a priest. His fellow-students, with whom he had frequent quarrels, thought him quite mad, and often this conception of him saved him from bodily hurt.

Confined to his bed by the slight injuries of which we have spoken, he had said to his mother, quite simply, as he said everything: "I was furious, I picked a quarrel with some soldiers who were staring at me and laughing, I fought with them, and got no more than I deserve," after which he had changed the subject. With Armance de Zohiloff, his cousin, he had entered into greater detail. "I am subject to moments of misery and fury which are not madness," he said to her one evening, "but which will make me be thought mad in society as I was at the Ecole Polytechnique. It is unfortunate, that is all; but what I cannot face is the fear of finding myself suddenly burdened with some cause for everlasting regret, as nearly happened at the time of poor Pierre's accident." "You made a noble reparation for that, you gave him not only a pension but your time, and if he had had the least spark of decent feeling in him you would have made his fortune. What more could you do?" "Nothing, I dare say, once the accident had happened, or I should be a monster not to have done it. But that is not all, these fits of despondency which every one takes for madness, seem to make me a creature apart. I see the poorest, the most limited, the most wretched, outwardly, of the young men of my generation each blessed with one or two lifelong friends who share his joys and sorrows. In the evening I see them go out and take the air together, and they tell one another everything that interests them; I and I only find myself isolated, without a friend in the world. I have not, nor shall I ever have any one to whom I can freely confide what is in my mind. What outlet should I have for my feelings if I had any of the sort that wring the heart! Am I then fated to live always without friends, and with barely an acquaintance! Am I an evil-doer?" he added, with a sigh. "Certainly not, but you furnish the people who do not like you with pretexts," Armance said to him in the free, severe tone of friendship, and trying to hide the all too real pity which his grief inspired in her. "For instance, you who are so perfectly

polite towards everybody, why did you not shew yourself the day before yesterday at Madame de Claix's ball?"

"Because it was her foolish compliments at the ball six months ago that put me to the shame of being worsted by two young peasants armed with sabres."

"That is all very well," Mademoiselle de Zohiloff retorted; "but pray observe that you always find reasons to excuse yourself from going into society. You must not go on to complain of the isolation in which you live." "Ah, it is friends that I need, and not society. Is it among the drawing-rooms that I shall find a friend?" "Yes, since you did not succeed in finding one at the École Polytechnique." "You are right," Octave replied after a long silence; "I see your point of view for the moment, and tomorrow, when it is a question of acting, I shall act in a manner the opposite of that which seems reasonable to me today, and entirely from pride! Ah, if heaven had made me the son of a linen-draper, I should have worked in the counting-house from the age of sixteen; instead of which all my occupations have been mere luxury; I should-be less proud and more happy. . . . Ah! how I detest myself! . . ."

These complaints, albeit apparently selfish, interested Armance; Octave's eyes expressed such possibilities of love, and were at times so tender!

She, without clearly explaining it to herself, felt that Octave was the victim of that sort of unreasoning sensibility which makes men wretched and worthy to be loved. A passionate imagination led him to exaggerate the happiness which he could not enjoy. Had he received from heaven a dry, cold, reasoning heart, had he been born at Geneva; then, with all the other advantages which he did possess, he might have been quite happy. All that he lacked was an ordinary nature.

It was only in the company of his cousin that Octave ventured now and again to express his thoughts aloud. We see now why he had been so painfully affected on discovering that this charming cousin's sentiments had changed with his change of fortune.

On the morning after the day on which Octave had longed for death, he was awakened with a start at seven o'clock by his uncle the Commander, who

entered his room making as much noise as possible. The man was never free from affectation. Octave's anger at this noise lasted for barely a few seconds; a sense of duty recurred to him, and he greeted M. de Soubirane in the light and pleasant tone which seemed best suited to his mood.

This vulgar soul who, before or after good birth, could think of nothing in the world but money, explained at length to the noble Octave that he must not go altogether out of his mind with joy when he passed from an income of twenty-five thousand livres to the prospect of one hundred thousand. This philosophical and almost Christian discourse ended with the advice to speculate on 'Change as soon as he should have secured a twentieth part of his two millions. The Marquis would not fail to place part of this increased fortune at Octave's disposal; but he was on no account to operate on 'Change save by the Commander's advice; the latter knew Madame la Comtesse de ——— , and they could speculate in the Funds with certainty. These last words made Octave start. "Yes, my boy," said the Commander, who mistook this movement for a sign of doubt, "with certainty. I have rather neglected the Comtesse since her absurd behaviour with M. le Prince de S ——— ; still, we are more or less related, and I shall leave you now to go and find our friend in common, the Duc de ——— , who will bring us together again."

CHAPTER FOUR

Half a dupe, half duping, The first deceived

perhaps by her deceit And fair words, as all

these philosophers. Philosophers they say?

Mark this, Diego, The devil can cite scripture

for his purpose. Oh, what a goodly outside

falsehood hath!

MASSINGER.

[This motto is printed in the French editions as prose. The last two lines are taken from The Merchant of Venice, Act I, Scene III, where Antonio says: "Mark you this, Bassanio, The devil," etc. The ascription to Massinger need not be taken too seriously. Compare Scarlet and Black, Chapter XLVI. — C. K. S. M.]

This fatuous invasion by the Commander almost plunged Octave back in his misanthropy of overnight. His disgust with the rest of mankind had risen to a climax when his servant appeared carrying a stout volume very carefully wrapped in English tissue paper. The seal it bore had been beautifully engraved, but the blazon itself was somewhat repellent: sable, two bones in saltire. Octave, whose taste was perfect, admired the accuracy of outline of this pair of tibias and the perfection of the engraver's skill. "It is the School of Pikler," he said to himself; "this must be one of my cousin, the devout Madame de C —— —'s follies." This suspicion proved unfounded when he saw inside the parcel a magnificent copy of the Bible, bound by Thouvenin. "Devout Catholics do not give one the Bible," said Octave as he opened the accompanying letter; but he sought in vain for the signature; there was none,

and he tossed the letter unread into the grate. A moment later, his servant, old Saint–Jacques, entered the room with an air of cunning. “Who sent me this parcel?” said Octave. “It is a mystery, they are trying to keep it secret from M. le Vicomte; but it was simply old Perrin who left it with the porter and made off like a pickpocket.” “And who is old Perrin?” “One of Madame la Marquise de Bonnivet’s servants whom she pretended to dismiss and now uses for secret errands.” “Do you mean that people suspect Madame de Bonnivet of a love-affair?” “Good heavens, no, Sir. The secret errands are for the new religion. It is a Bible, perhaps, that Madame la Marquise has sent to Monsieur as a great secret. Monsieur perhaps recognized the writing of Madame Rouvier, Madame la Marquise’s confidential maid.” Octave looked in the grate and made the man give him back the letter which had fallen behind the fire and was not burned. He saw with surprise that the writer knew quite well that he read Helvetius, Bentham, Bayle and other bad books. “The most spotless virtue would not be safe,” he said to himself; “as soon as people form a sect, they stoop to the use of intrigue and employ spies. It is evidently since the Bill of Indemnity was introduced that I have become worthy that people should take an interest in my salvation and the influence that I may one day wield.”

Throughout that day, the conversation of the Marquis de Malivert, the Commander and two or three trusted friends who were invited to dine Was an almost incessant allusion, in distinctly bad taste, to Octave’s marriage and to his new position. Being still affected by the spiritual crisis through which he had passed during the night, he was less frigid than usual. His mother thought him paler, and he made it his duty, if not to be gay, at least to appear to be occupying himself only with ideas that gave rise to pleasing pictures; he set himself to the task with so much energy that he succeeded in taking in every one in the room. Nothing could deter him, not even the Commander’s pleasantries touching the prodigious effect produced by two millions on the mind of a philosopher. Octave took advantage of his feigned bewilderment to say that, were he a Prince, he would not marry before he was twenty-six, this being the age at which his father had married. “It is evident that the fellow is nourishing the secret ambition of becoming a Bishop or a Cardinal,” said the Commander as soon as Octave had left the room; “his birth and sound doctrine will carry him to the Hat.” This speech, which made Madame de Malivert smile, caused the Marquis great uneasiness. “You may say what you please,” he replied to his wife’s smile, “my son’s only

intimate relations are with churchmen or young scholars of the same way of thinking, and, a thing that is quite unknown in my family, he shews a marked dislike for officers of his own age." "There is something strange about that young man," M. de Soubirane went on. At this reflexion it was Madame de Malîvert's turn to sigh.

Octave, overcome by the boredom with which the obligation to talk had filled him, left this group of old people and went at an early hour to the Gymnase: he could not endure the wit of M. Scribe's amusing plays. "Still," he told himself, "nothing else has had so genuine a success, and to despise a thing without knowing it is an absurdity too common in our society for me to acquire any credit by avoiding it." It was in vain that he prolonged the experiment through two of the most charming sketches given at the Theatre de Madame. The wittiest and most amusing lines seemed to him to be tainted with vulgarity, and the handing over of the key in the second act of Le Mariage de Raison drove him from the theatre. He entered a restaurant and, faithful to the mystery which enveloped all his actions, called for candles and a plate of soup: when the soup was put before him, he locked the door, read with interest two newspapers which he had bought outside, burned them with the greatest care in the grate, paid his bill and left. He went home and changed his clothes, and found himself almost eager that evening to put in an appearance at Madame de Bonnivet's. "How can I be certain," he wondered, "that that wicked Duchesse d'Ancre was not slandering Mademoiselle de Zohiloff? My uncle is convinced that my head has been turned by those two millions." This idea, which had been suggested to Octave by something of no importance that he had read in one of his newspapers, restored his happiness. He thought still of Armance, but as of his only friend, or rather the only person who was almost a friend to him.

He was far from imagining himself to be in love, he had a horror of that sentiment. He had sworn to himself a thousand times in the last four years that he would never love. This obligation to refrain from love was the mainspring of his whole conduct and the chief occupation of his life. This evening, his soul strengthened by virtue and misery, and become merely virtue and strength, felt simply the fear of having too lightly condemned a friend.

On reaching Madame de Bonnivet's drawing-room, Octave did not once look at Armance; but throughout the evening his eyes did not miss a single one of her movements. He began, upon entering the room, by paying marked attention to the Duchesse d'Ancre; he spoke to her with a deference so profound that the lady had the pleasure of supposing him to be converted to the respect due to her rank. "Now that he has the prospect of becoming rich, this philosopher is one of us," she murmured to Madame de la Ronze.

Octave wished to make certain of the extent of this woman's perversity; if he found that she was really wicked, that would be to some extent an admission that Mademoiselle de Zohiloff was innocent. He observed that the feeling of hatred alone retained some animation in the withered heart of Madame d'Ancre; whereas, on the other hand, only things that were generous and noble inspired her with revulsion. One would have said that she felt the need to be avenged on them. Ignoble and base sentiments, but ignobility clothed in the most elegant expressions, had alone the privilege of making the Duchesse's little eyes sparkle.

Octave was thinking of how to free himself from the interest with which she was listening to him when he heard Madame de Bonnivet call for her chessmen. These were a little masterpiece of carved ivory which M. l'Abbé Dubois had brought from Canton. Octave seized the opportunity to leave Madame d'Ancre, and asked his cousin to entrust him with the key of the desk in which her fear of her servants' clumsiness made her keep these magnificent chessmen. Armance was no longer in the room; she had gone out a few moments earlier with Méry de Tersan, her bosom friend; had not Octave asked for the key of the desk, the absence of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff would have given rise to unfavourable comment, and on her return she might perhaps have had to endure several hostile glances, perfectly restrained, but distinctly harsh. Armance was penniless; she was only eighteen, and Madame de Bonnivet was thirty and more; she was still quite a beautiful woman, but Armance, too, was beautiful.

The two friends had stopped by the chimneypiece of a large boudoir that opened out of the drawing-room. Armance had wished to shew Méry a portrait of Lord Byron a proof of which Mr. Phillips, the English painter, had recently sent to her aunt. Octave could hear quite distinctly as he passed along the passage by the door of the boudoir: "What can you expect? He is

like all the rest! A soul that I thought so noble overpowered by the prospect of two millions!" The accent in which these flattering words, that I thought so noble, were uttered, fell on Octave like a bolt from the blue; he stood rooted to the ground. When he moved on, his tread was so light that the sharpest ear could not have caught it. As he passed again by the boudoir with the chessmen in his hand, he stopped for a moment; immediately he blushed at his indiscretion and returned to the drawing-room. The words which he had just overheard were by no means decisive in a world in which envy is capable of assuming every imaginable form; but the accent of candour and honesty in which they had been uttered echoed in his heart. That was not the tone of envy.

Having handed the Chinese chessmen to his cousin, Octave felt that he needed time for reflexion; he took up a position in a corner of the room behind a whist-table, and there his imagination repeated to him a score of times the sound of the words he had just overheard. This profound and delicious meditation had long absorbed him, when the voice of Armance came to his ear. He had not yet thought what means to employ to regain his cousin's esteem; he was still lost in ecstatic enjoyment of the bliss of having forfeited it. As he rejoined the group that surrounded Madame de Bonni-vet, and came away from the remote corner occupied by the tranquil whist-players, Armance noticed the expression in his eyes; they rested upon her with that sort of tenderness and weariness which, after intense joys, makes the eyes seem almost incapable of unduly rapid movements.

Octave was not to find happiness a second time that evening; he could not address a single word to Armance. "Nothing could be harder than to justify myself," he said to himself while pretending to be listening to the exhortations of the Duchesse d'Ancre who, being with him the last to leave the drawing-room, insisted upon taking him home. The night was cold and dry with a brilliant moon; on reaching home, Octave called for his horse and rode for some miles along the new boulevard. On his return, about three o'clock in the morning, without knowing what he was doing or why, he passed before the Hôtel de Bonnivet,

CHAPTER FIVE

Her glossy hoar was cluster'd o'er a brow

Bright with intelligence, and fair, and smooth;

Her eyebrows' shape was like th' aerial bow,

Her cheek all purple with the beam of youth,

Mounting, at times, to a transparent glow,

As if her veins ran lightning. . . .

DON JUAN, I, 61.

"How am I to prove to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, by deeds and not by vain words, that the pleasure of seeing my father's fortune multiplied fourfold has not absolutely turned my head?" The search for an answer to this question was Octave's sole occupation during the next twenty-four hours. For the first time in his life, he had lost his heart without knowing it.

For many years past, he had always been conscious of his own sentiments, and had confined their attention to the objects that seemed to him reasonable. Now, on the other hand, it was with all the impatience of a boy of twenty that he waited for the hour at which he was to meet Mademoiselle de Zohiloff. He had no longer the slightest doubt as to the possibility of speaking to a person whom he saw twice almost every day; he was embarrassed only over the selection of the words best fitted to convince her. "For, really," he said, "I cannot within twenty-four hours perform an action that will prove in a decisive manner that I am above the pettiness of which in her heart of hearts she accuses me, and I must be allowed to protest first of all in words." And indeed an abundance of words presented themselves to him in turn; some seemed to him to be over-emphatic; at other moments he

was afraid of treating too lightly so serious an imputation. He had not in the least decided what he ought to say to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff when eleven struck, and he arrived among the first visitors in the drawing-room of the Hôtel de Bonnivet. But what was his astonishment when he discovered that Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, who spoke to him several times in the course of the evening, and apparently quite in her ordinary tone, deprived him nevertheless of any opportunity of saying a word to her which no one else might hear! Octave was greatly vexed, the evening passed in a flash.

On the following day he was equally unfortunate; next day again, and for many days after that, he was prevented from speaking to Armance. Each day he hoped to find an opportunity of saying the words that were so essential to his honour, and each day, without there being the slightest sign of affectation in Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's behaviour, he saw his hope vanish. He was losing the friendship and esteem of the one person who seemed to him worthy of his own, because he was suspected of sentiments the opposite to those that he actually held. Nothing really could have been more flattering, but at the same time nothing was more annoying. Octave was intensely preoccupied in what was happening to him; it took him several days to grow accustomed to his new position of disfavour with Armance. Quite unconsciously, he who had so loved silence acquired the habit of talking volubly whenever Mademoiselle de Zohiloff was within earshot. In truth, it mattered little to him though he seemed odd or inconsequent. Whatever brilliant or eminent lady he might be addressing, he spoke really to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff alone, and for her benefit.

This real misfortune distracted Octave from his black misery, he forgot his habit of seeking always to estimate the amount of happiness that he was enjoying at the moment. He was losing his one friend; he saw himself refused an esteem which he was so certain that he deserved; but these misfortunes, cruel as they might be, did not go so far as to inspire in him that profound distaste for life which he had felt a fortnight earlier. He asked himself: "What man is there who has not been slandered? The severity with which I am treated is an earnest of the eagerness with which the injury will be repaired when the truth shall at last be known."

Octave could see an obstacle that kept him from happiness, but he could also see happiness, or at least the end of his suffering and of a suffering that

completely absorbed his thoughts. His life had a new object, he longed passionately to reconquer the esteem of Armance; it was no easy undertaking. The girl had a strange nature. Born on the outskirts of the Russian Empire near the Caucasian frontier, at Se-bastopol where her father was in command, Mademoiselle de Zohiloff concealed beneath an apparent meekness a firm will, worthy of the rugged clime in which she had spent her childhood. Her mother, who was closely related to Mesdames de Bonnivet and de Malivert, had when attached to the Court of Louis XVIII at Mitau, married a Russian colonel. M. de Zohiloff came of a family which for the last hundred years had obtained the highest preferments; but the father and grandfather of this officer, having had the misfortune to attach themselves to favourites who were shortly afterwards banished to Siberia, had seen their fortune rapidly diminish.

Armance's mother died in 1811; shortly afterwards she lost General de Zohiloff, her father, who was killed at the battle of Montmirail. Madame de Bonnivet, on learning that she had a relative living alone and friendless in a small town in the heart of Russia, with no fortune beyond an income of one hundred louis, did not hesitate to invite her to France. She spoke of her as a niece and reckoned upon marrying her by obtaining some pension from the Court; Armance's maternal great-grandfather had worn the Blue Riband. We see that, though barely eighteen, Mademoiselle de Zohiloff had already had sufficient experience of misfortune. This perhaps was why the minor events of life seemed to glide over her, leaving her unmoved. Now and again it was not impossible to read in her eyes that she was capable of being deeply affected, but one could see that nothing vulgar would succeed in touching her. This perfect serenity, which it would have been so gratifying to make her forget for a moment, was combined in her with the subtlest intellect, and entitled her to a consideration beyond her years.

She was indebted to this singular nature, and above all to the enchanting gaze of a pair of large, deep blue eyes, for the friendship of all the most eminent ladies in Madame de Bonnivet's circle; but Mademoiselle de Zohiloff had also a number of enemies. In vain had her aunt tried to force her out of her sheer incapacity to bestow her attention upon people whom she did not like. It was all too evident that in speaking to them she was thinking of something else. There were, moreover, any number of little tricks of speech and behaviour which Armance would not have ventured to

condemn in other women; possibly it never occurred to her to forbid herself the use of them; but had she allowed herself that liberty, for long afterwards she would have blushed whenever she thought of them. In her childhood, her feelings with regard to childish trifles had been so violent that she had strongly reproached herself for them. She had formed the habit of criticising herself with reference not to the effect she produced on others but to her sentiments at the moment, the memory of which next day might be the bane of her life.

People found something Asiatic in the features of this girl, as in her gentleness and a carelessness which seemed to belie her age, so childish was it. None of her actions gave any direct indication of an exaggerated sense of what a woman owes to herself, and yet a certain graceful charm, an enchanting reserve, was diffused round about her. Without seeking in any way to attract attention, and letting opportunities of success escape her at every moment, the girl was interesting. One could see that Armance did not allow herself a whole crowd of things which custom has authorised and which are to be observed every day in the conduct of the most distinguished women. In short, I have no doubt that, but for her extreme gentleness and her youth, Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's enemies would have accused her of being a prude.

Her education abroad, and her belated arrival in France, served as a further excuse for whatever slight oddity the eye of malice might have discovered in her manner of being impressed by events, and indeed in her behaviour generally.

Octave spent his life among the enemies which this unusual nature had created for Mademoiselle de Zohiloff; the marked favour which she enjoyed with Madame de Bonnivet was a grievance which the friends of that lady, so important a figure in society, could not forgive her. It was above all things her unswerving honesty that alarmed them. As it is far from easy to attack the actions of a young girl, they attacked her beauty. Octave was the first to admit that his young cousin might easily have been far better looking. She was remarkable for what I might perhaps venture to call Russian beauty: this was a combination of features which, while expressing to a marked degree a simplicity and piety no longer to be found among over-civilised races, offered, one must confess, a singular blend of the purest Circassian beauty

with certain German forms somewhat prematurely developed. There was nothing common in the outline of those features, so profoundly serious, but a little too full of expression, even in repose, to correspond exactly to the idea generally held in France of the beauty becoming to a young girl.

It is a great advantage, with generous natures, to the people who are accused in their hearing, that those people's faults should be pointed out first of all by the lips of an enemy. When the hatred of Madame de Bonnivet's bosom friends deigned to stoop to open jealousy of the poor little existence of Armance, they never ceased to mock at the bad effect produced by the too prominent brow and by features which, seen in full face, were perhaps a little too strongly marked.

The only real grounds for attack which the expression of Armance's countenance could offer to her enemies was a singular look which she had at times when her mind was most detached. This fixed and profound gaze was one of extreme attention; there was nothing in it, certainly, that could shock the most severe delicacy; it suggested neither coquetry nor assurance; but no one could deny that it was singular, and, in that respect, out of place in a young person. Madame de Bonnivet's flatterers, when they were sure of being noticed, would sometimes imitate this look, in discussing Armance among themselves; but these vulgar spirits robbed it of an element that they had never thought of noticing. "It is with such eyes," Madame de Mali-vert said to them one day, out of patience with their malevolence, "that a pair of angels exiled among men and obliged to disguise themselves in mortal form, would gaze at one another in mutual recognition."

It will be admitted that with a character so steadfast in its beliefs and so frank as was that of Armance, it was no easy matter to justify oneself against a grave charge by adroit hints. Octave would have required, to be successful, a presence of mind and above all a degree of assurance which were bevond his years.

Unconsciously Armance allowed him to see, by a casual utterance, that she no longer looked upon him as an intimate friend; his heart was wrung, he remained speechless for a quarter of an hour. He was far from discovering in the form of Armance's speech a pretext for replying to it in an effective manner and so recovering his rights. Now and again he attempted to speak,

but it was too late, and his reply was no longer appropriate; still, it did shew that he was concerned. While seeking in vain for a way of justifying himself in face of the accusation which Armance brought against him in secret, Octave let it be seen, quite unconsciously, how deeply it affected him; this was perhaps the most skilful method of winning her forgiveness.

Now that the course to be adopted with regard to the Bill of Indemnity was no longer a secret, even from society as a whole, Octave, greatly to his surprise, found that he had become a sort of personage. He saw himself made an object of attention by serious people. He was treated in quite a novel fashion, especially by very great ladies who might see in him a possible match for their daughters. This mania of the mothers of the period, to be constantly in pursuit of a son-inlaw, shocked Octave to a degree which it is difficult to express. The Duchesse de ——— , to whom he had the honour to be distantly related, thought it necessary to apologise to him for not having kept him a place in a box which she had engaged at the Gymnase for the following evening. “I know, my dear cousin,” she said to him, “how unfair you are to that charming theatre, the only one that I find amusing.” “I admit my error,” said Octave, “the dramatists are right, and their witty speeches are not tainted with vulgarity; but the object of this retractation is by no means to beg you for a place. I admit that I am not made for society, nor for that kind of play which, evidently, is the most lifelike copy of it.” This misanthropic tone, in so handsome a young man, appeared highly ridiculous to the Duchesse’s two grand-daughters, who made fun of him for the rest of the evening, but nevertheless on the following day treated Octave with perfect sim-plicity. He observed this change and shrugged his shoulders.

Astounded by his successes, and even more by their requiring so little effort on his part, Octave, who was very strong on the theory of life, expected to have to meet the attacks of envy; “for unquestionably,” he told himself, “this Indemnity must procure me that pleasure also.” He had not long to wait; a few days later, he was informed that some young officers of Madame de Bonnivet’s circle were only too ready to mock at his change of fortune. “What a misfortune for that poor Malivert,” said one, “these two millions falling on his head like a chimney-can! He won’t be able to become a priest now! It is hard!” “One fails to conceive,” put in a second, “that in this age when the nobility is so savagely attacked, a man can dare to bear a title and

yet shrink from his baptism of blood." "Still, that is the only virtue which the Jacobin party has not yet thought of calling hypocritical," added a third.

Fired by these remarks, Octave began to go about more, appeared in all the ballrooms, was very haughty and even, so far as it lay in his power, impertinent to other young men; but this produced no effect. Greatly to his astonishment (he was only twenty), he found that people respected him all the more for this attitude. As a matter of fact, it was generally decided that the Indemnity had absolutely turned his head; but most of the women went on to say: "The only thing he lacked was that proud, independent air!" It was the name which they were pleased to give to what seemed to him insolence, which he would never have allowed himself to display had he not been told of the ill-natured remarks that were being made about him. Octave enjoyed the surprising welcome which he received in society and which went so well with that tendency to hold himself aloof which was natural to him. His success pleased him most of all on account of the happiness which he discerned in his mother's eyes; it was in answer to repeated pressure from Madame de Malivert that he had abandoned his beloved solitude. But the most usual effect of the attentions of which he saw himself made the object was to remind him of his disfavour with Mademoiselle de Zohiloff. This seemed to increase day by day. There were moments when this disfavour almost bordered upon incivility, it was at all events the most decided aloofness, and was all the more marked inasmuch as the new existence which Octave owed to the Indemnity was nowhere more evident than at the Hôtel de Bonnivet.

Now that he might one day find himself the host in an influential drawing-room, the Marquise was absolutely determined to wean him from that arid philosophy of utility. This was the name which she had given for some months past to what is ordinarily called the philosophy of the eighteenth century. "When will you throw on the fire," she said to him, "the books of those gloomy writers which you alone, of all the young men of your age and rank, still read?"

It was to a sort of German mysticism that Madame de Bonnivet hoped to convert Octave. She deigned to examine him, to see whether he possessed the sense of religion. Octave reckoned this attempt at conversion among the strangest of the things that had happened to him, since his emerging from the

solitary life. “Here is one of the follies,” he thought, “which no one could ever foresee.”

Madame la Marquise de Bonnivet might be reckoned one of the most remarkable women in societj’. Features of a perfect regularity, very large eyes, with the most imposing gaze, a superb figure and manners that were distinctly noble, a little too noble, perhaps, placed her in the highest rank wherever she might be found. Rooms of a certain vastness were especially favourable to Madame de Bonnivet; for instance, on the day of the opening of the final session of the Chambers, she had been the first to be mentioned among the most brilliant women present. Octave saw with pleasure the effect that would be created by her researches into his sense of religion. This creature, who imagined himself to be so free from shams, could not restrain a start of pleasure at the sight of a sham which the world would shortly be placing to his credit.

Madame de Bonnivet’s exalted virtue was beyond the reach of slander. Her imagination was occupied exclusively with God and the Angels, or at the lowest with certain intermediary beings between God and man, who, according to the most modern German philosophers, hover a few feet above our heads. It is from this elevated though not remote station that they magnetise our souls, etc., etc. These visions, in a woman so highly esteemed, were most distressing to His Grace the Archbishop. “The reputation for wisdom which Madame de Bonnivet has enjoyed, upon such good grounds, since her entry into society, and which all the cunning innuendo of the Jesuits in lay clothing has been powerless to assail, she is going to risk for my sake,” Octave told himself, and the pleasure of attracting in a marked fashion the attention of so important a woman made him endure with patience the long explanations which she deemed necessary to his conversion.

Presently, among his new acquaintance, Octave was marked down as the inseparable companion of that Marquise de Bonnivet, so famous in a certain section of society, and (or so she thought) creating a sensation at Court when she deigned to appear there. Although the Marquise was a very great lady in the height of the fashion, and moreover was still very good looking, these advantages made no impression upon Octave; unfortunately he detected a trace of affectation in her manner, and whenever he observed this defect

anywhere, his natural instinct was only to deride it. But this sage of twenty summers was far from penetrating the true cause of the pleasure which he found in letting himself be converted. He, who so many times had taken vows against love, that one might say that hatred of that passion was the main object of his life, went with pleasure to the Hôtel de Bonnivet because invariably that Armance who despised him, who hated him perhaps, was stationed within a few feet of her aunt. Octave was quite free from presumption; the principal flaw in his character indeed that he exaggerated his own disadvan-e7 tages, but if he did admire himself at all, it was in respect of his honesty and stoutness of heart. He had rid himself, without the least ostentation or weakness, of — a number of opinions, ridiculous but agreeable enough in themselves, which are guiding principles to the majority of young men of his class and age.

These victories which he could not conceal from himself, that for instance over his love of a military career, independent of any ambition for military rank and promotion, these victories, I repeat, had inspired him with great confidence in his own firmness. “It is from cowardice and not from want of enlightenment that we do not read in our own hearts,” he was in the habit of saying, and with the help of this fine principle, he relied a little too much on his own perspicacity. A chance word informing him that one day he might be in love with Mademoiselle de Zohiloff would have made him leave Paris immediately: but in his present position such an idea never occurred to him. He esteemed Armance highly and so to speak exclusively; he saw himself scorned by her, and he esteemed her precisely on account of her scorn. Was it not quite natural to wish to regain her esteem? There was, underlying this, no suspicious desire to attract the girl. What was calculated to prevent the very birth of the slightest suspicion of love for her was that when Octave found himself among Mademoiselle de Zohiloff’s enemies he was the first to admit her defects. But the state of uneasiness and hope, doomed to incessant disappointment, in which his cousin’s silent treatment of him kept him plunged prevented him from seeing that none of the faults with which she was reproached in his hearing amounted to anything serious in his mind.

One day, for instance, they were attacking Armance’s predilection for hair cut short and falling in thick curls round the head, as worn in Moscow. “Mademoiselle de Zohiloff finds the fashion convenient,” said one of the Marquise’s flatterers; “she does not wish to sacrifice too much time to her

toilet." Octave's malicious spirit noticed with pleasure the success which this argument achieved among society women. They let it be understood that Armance did right to sacrifice everything to the duties which her devotion to her aunt imposed upon her; and their eyes seemed to be saying: "to sacrifice everything to her duties as paid companion." Octave's pride was far from thinking of replying to this insinuation. While they in their malice enjoyed it, he yielded in silence and delight to a little start of passionate admiration. He felt, without expressing it to himself: "This woman who is attacked thus by all the rest is nevertheless the only one here who is worthy of my esteem! She is as poor as these other women are rich; and she alone might be permitted to exaggerate the importance of money. And yet she despises it, she who has not a thousand crowns a year; and it is solely and basely adored by these women, all of whom are living in the greatest comfort."

CHAPTER SIX

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;

By that sin fell the angels, how can man then,

The image of his Maker, hope to win by't?

KING HENRY VIII, Act III.

One evening, after the tables had been arranged and the great ladies arrived for whom Madame de Bonnivet put herself out, she talked to

Octave with an unusual interest: "I do not understand your nature," she repeated for the hundredth time. "If you will swear to me," he replied, "never to betray my secret, I will confide in you; and no one else has ever known it." "What! Not even Madame de Malivert?" "My respect for her forbids me to distress her." Madame de Bonnivet, in spite of all the idealism of her faith, was by no means insensible of the charm of knowing the great secret of one of the men who, in her eyes, came nearest to perfection; besides, this secret had never been confided to any one.

Upon Octave's requesting an eternal discretion, Madame de Bonnivet left the drawing-room and after a while returned, wearing upon the gold chain of her watch a singular ornament: this was a sort of cross of iron made at Kônigsberg; she held it in her left hand and said to Octave in a low and solemn tone: "You ask me for eternal secrecy; in all circumstances, towards every one in the world. With no mental reservation or Jesuitical pretermission, I declare to you by Jehovah, yes, I will keep your secret."

"Very well, Madame," said Octave, amused by this little ceremony and by the sacramental air of his noble cousin, "what often clouds my soul with darkness, what I have never confided to any one, is this horrible misfortune: I have no conscience. I find in myself no trace of what you call the intimate

sense, no instinctive revulsion from crime. If I abhor vice, it is quite vulgarly by force of reason and because I find it harmful. And what proves to me that there is absolutely nothing divine or instinctive in my nature, is that I can always recall all the elements of the reasoning by dint of which I find vice to be horrible." "Ah, how I pity you, my dear cousin! You distress me," said Madame de Bonnivet in a tone that revealed the keenest pleasure; "yours is precisely what we call the rebellious nature."

At this moment, her interest in Octave was plain to the eyes of several malicious watchers; for they were being watched. Her gestures shed all their affectation and became passionate and genuine; her eyes darted a mild flame as she listened to this handsome young man; still more, when she commiserated him. Madame de Bonnivet's good friends, who were watching her from a distance, indulged in the most rash judgments, whereas she was merely transported by the pleasure of having at last found a rebellious nature. Octave promised her a memorable victory if she succeeded in awakening in him conscience and the intimate sense. A celebrated Doctor of the last century, summoned to the bedside of a great nobleman, his friend, after examining the symptoms of the disease, slowly and in silence, exclaimed in a sudden transport of joy: "Ah! Monsieur le Marquis, it is a disease that has been lost for centuries! Vitreous phlegm! A superb disease, absolutely fatal. Ah! I have discovered it, I have discovered it!" Such was the joy of Madame de Bonnivet; it was in a sense the joy of an artist.

Since she had been engaged in spreading the new Protestantism, which is to take the place of Christianity, the latter being now a thing of the past, and, as we know, on the point of undergoing its fourth metamorphosis, she had heard mention of rebellious natures; they form the solitary objection to the system of German mysticism, founded upon the existence of the intimate consciousness of good and evil. She now had the good fortune to have discovered one; she alone in the world knew his secret. And this rebellious nature was perfect; for his moral conduct being strictly honourable, no suspicion of personal interest could taint the purity of his diabolism,.

I shall not repeat any of the sound reasons which Madame de Bonnivet advanced that evening to Octave to persuade him that he had an intimate sense. The reader has not, perhaps, the good fortune to be seated within a few feet of a charming cousin who despises him with all her heart and whose

friendship he is burning to reconquer. This intimate sense, as its name implies, cannot manifest itself by any outward sign; but nothing could be simpler or easier to understand, said Madame de Bonnivet; “you are a rebellious nature,” etc., etc. “Do you not see, do you not feel, that, apart from space and time, there is nothing real here below?”

Throughout the course of these sound arguments, a jov that was really almost diabolical sparkled in the glance of the Vicomte de Malivert; and Madame de Bonnivet, who for that matter was a most perspicacious woman, exclaimed: “Ah, my dear Octave, rebellion is evident in your eyes.” It must be admitted that those great dark eyes, which as a rule shewed such discouragement, and whose darting flames escaped through the curls of the most beautiful golden hair in the world, were quite touching at that moment. They had that charm better felt perhaps in France than anywhere else: they revealed a soul which has been thought frozen for years past and which all of a sudden becomes animated, but for you, and for you alone. The electrical effect produced in Madame de Bonnivet by this instant of perfect beauty and the natural tone full of feeling which it imparted to her accents made her truly seductive. At that moment, she would have gone to the scaffold to assure the triumph of her new religion; generosity and devotion shone in her eyes. What a triumph for the malice that was watching her.

And these two people, the most remarkable in the room, in which, all unconsciously, they were providing a spectacle, had no thought of their own pleasure; nothing was farther from their minds. This is what would have seemed perfectly incredible to Madame la Duchesse d’Ancre and her neighbours, the most refined women in France. Thus it is that matters of sentiment are judged in society.

Armance had remained perfectly consistent in her attitude towards her cousin. Several months had passed without her addressing a word to him upon personal matters. Often she did not speak to him throughout an evening, and Octave was beginning to note the days upon which she had deigned to be aware of his presence.

Being careful not to appear disconcerted by Mademoiselle de Zohiloff’s hatred, Octave was no longer remarkable in society for his invincible silence nor for the singular and perfectly noble air with which, in the past, those fine

eyes of his had seemed to shew their boredom. He talked freely and without the least regard for the absurdities into which he might be led. In this way he became, unconsciously, one of the most fashionable of the male visitors to the drawing-rooms which in a sense were dependent upon Madame de Bonnivet's. He was indebted to the perfect want of interest with which he approached everything for a real superiority over his rivals; he arrived without pretensions among a crowd of people who were devoured by them. His fame, descending from the drawing-room of the illustrious Marquise de Bonnivet into social spheres in which that lady was envied, had placed him without the least effort in a most agreeable position. Without having as yet done anything, he saw himself, from his first entry into society, classed as a being apart. There was nothing about him, not even the disdainful silence with which he was at once inspired by the presence of people whom he thought incapable of understanding exalted feelings, that was not accepted as a striking singularity. Mademoiselle de Zohiloff observed this success and was amazed by it. In the last three months, Octave was no longer the same man. It was not surprising that his conversation, so brilliant to every one else, had a secret charm for Armance; the sole object of that conversation was to give her pleasure.

Towards midwinter, Armance thought that Octave was going to make a brilliant marriage, and it was easy to estimate the social position to which a few months had sufficed to raise the young Vicomte de Malivert. There appeared now and again in Madame de Bonnivet's drawing-room a very great nobleman indeed who had all his life been on the watch for things or people that were going to become the fashion. His mania was to attach himself to these, and to this strange idea he was indebted for a considerable social success; a man of the commonest mould, he had raised himself far above his level. This great nobleman, as servile towards Ministers as any clerk, was on the best of terms with them, and he had a grand-daughter, his sole heir, to whose husband he would be able to convey the highest honours and the greatest benefits that it is in the power of the Monarchy to bestow. All this winter he had appeared to have his eye upon Octave, but no one as yet dreamed of the heights to which the young Vicomte was to rise. M. le Duc de —— —— was giving a great stag-hunt in his forests in Normandy. To be admitted to these parties was a distinction; and for the last thirty years he had not issued an invitation for which skilful commentators could not divine a reason.

Suddenly, and without a word of warning, he wrote a charming note to the Vicomte de Malivert, inviting him to come and hunt with him.

It was decided in Octave's family circle, perfectly acquainted with the ways and character of the old Duc de ——— — , that if his visit to the Château de Ranville should prove a success, they would one day see him a Duke and a Peer of France. He set off loaded with good advice by the Commander and the rest of the household; he had the honour to see a stag and four excellent hounds fling themselves into the Seine from a rock one hundred feet high, and on the third day he was back in Paris.

"You are evidently mad," Madame de Bonnivet said to him before Armance. "Does the young lady displease you?" "I scarcely examined her," he replied with great coolness, "she seems to me quite pleasant; but when the hour struck at which I-always come here I felt my soul plunged in darkness."

The religious discussions waxed warmer than ever after this fine piece of philosophy. Octave seemed to Madame de Bonnivet an astonishing creature. At length, the instinct of the conventions, if I dare venture upon such an expression, or certain intercepted smiles gave the fair Marquise to understand that a drawing-room in which one hundred persons assemble every evening is not precisely the most appropriate place in the world in which to investigate rebellion. She told Octave one evening to come to the house next day at noon, after breakfast. This was an invitation for which Octave had long been waiting.

The day following was one of the most brilliant of the month of April. The presence of spring in the air was revealed by a delicious breeze and gusts of warmth. Madame de Bonnivet decided to transport her theological conference into the garden. She was confident of finding in the always novel spectacle of nature some striking argument in support of one of the fundamental ideas of her philosophy: "What is really beautiful must always be true." The Marquise had indeed been talking extremely well and for a considerable time, when a maid came in search of her to remind her to pay her respects to a foreign Princess. This was an engagement which she had made a week earlier; but the interest of the new religion, of which it was hoped that Octave would one day be the Saint Paul, had banished every other thought from her mind. As the Marquise felt herself in the mood for

discussion, she asked Octave to wait for her. “Armance will keep you company,” she added.

As soon as Madame de Bonnivet had left them: “Do you know, cousin, what my conscience tells me?” Octave went on at once without the least timidity, for timidity is begotten of the love that knows itself and makes pretensions; “It tells me that for the last three months you have been despising me as a vulgar fellow whose head has been absolutely turned by the hope of an increase of fortune. I have long sought to justify myself to you, not by vain words but by actions. I can think of none that would be decisive; I, too, can have recourse only to your intimate sense, Well, this is what has happened to me. While I am talking, look in my eyes and see whether I am lying.” And Octave began to relate to his young kinswoman, with great wealth of detail and with the most perfect simplicity, the whole sequence of sentiments and endeavours of which the reader has been informed. He did not forget the speech addressed by Armance to her friend Méry de Tersan, which he had overheard when going to fetch the Chinese chessmen. “Those words determined the course of my life; from that moment I have thought of nothing but how to regain your esteem.” This memory touched Armance deeply, and silent tears began to trickle down her cheeks.

She did not once interrupt Octave; when he had finished speaking, she still remained silent for a long time. “You think me guilty!” said Octave, extremely touched by this silence. She did not answer. “I have forfeited your esteem,” he cried, and the tears trembled on his eyelids. “Tell me of any single action in the world by which I can reconquer the place I once held in your heart, and in an instant it will be performed.” These last words, uttered with a restrained and deep-rooted energy, were too much for Armance’s courage to endure; it was no longer possible for her to pretend, her tears overpowered her, and she wept openly. She was afraid lest Octave might go on and say something that would increase her discomfiture, and make her lose what little self-control she still retained. Above all, she was afraid to speak. She made haste to offer him her hand; and making an effort to speak, and to speak only as a friend: “You have all my esteem,” she told him. She was greatly relieved to see a maid approaching in the distance; the necessity of concealing her tears from the girl furnished her with an excuse for leaving the garden.

CHAPTER SEVEN

But passion most dissembles, yet betrays

Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky

Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays

Its workings through the vainly guarded eye,

And in whatever aspect it arrays

Itself, 'tis still the same hypocrisy;

Coldness or anger, even disdain or hate,

Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

DON JUAN, I, 73.

Octave remained motionless, his eyes brimming with tears, and not knowing whether he ought to rejoice or to mourn. After so long a period of waiting, he had at last been able to give battle, that battle for which he had so longed; but had he lost or won it? "If it is lost," he told himself, "there is nothing more for me in this direction. Armance thinks me so reprehensible that she pretends to be satisfied with the first excuse that I offer her, and does not deign to enter upon an explanation with a man so little worthy of her friendship. What is the meaning of those brief words: You have all my esteem? Could anything be colder? Is that a complete return to our old intimacy? Is it a polite way of cutting short a disagreeable explanation?" The departure, so abruptly, of Armance seemed to him to be an especially evil omen.

While Octave, a prey to a profound astonishment, was seeking to recall exactly what had happened to him, trying to forecast the consequences, and trembling lest, amid his efforts to reason fairly, he should suddenly arrive at some decisive revelation which would make an end of all uncertainty by proving to him that his cousin found him unworthy of her esteem, Armance was being racked by the most intense grief. Her tears ehoked her; but they were tears of shame and no longer of happiness.

She hastened to shut herself up in her own room. “Great God,” she said to herself in the intensity of her confusion, “what on earth will Octave think after seeing me in this state? Has he understood my tears? Alas! Can I doubt it? Since when has a simple admission of friendship made a girl of my age burst into tears? Oh, God! After such humiliation how can I venture to face him again? The only thing wanting to complete the horror of my situation was to have deserved his contempt. But,” Armance said to herself, “it was something more than a simple admission; for three months I avoided speaking to him; it is a sort of reconciliation between friends who have quarrelled, and people say that one sheds tears at reconciliations of that sort; — yes, but one does not run away, one is not plunged in the most intense confusion.

“Instead of shutting myself up and crying in my bedroom, I ought to be out in the garden and to go on talking to him, happy in the simple happiness of friendship. Yes,” Armance told herself, “I ought to go back to the garden; perhaps Madame de Bonnivet has not yet returned.” As she rose, she looked at herself in the glass and saw that she was not in a fit state to let herself be seen by a man. “Ah!” she cried, letting herself sink down in despair upon a chair, “I am a poor wretch who has forfeited her honour, and in whose eyes? In Octave’s.” Her sobs and her despair prevented her from thinking.

“What!” she said to herself, after an interval, “so peaceful, so happy even, in spite of my fatal secret, half an hour ago, and now ruined! Ruined for ever, without remedy! A man of such intelligence as his must have seen the whole extent of my weakness, and it is one of the weaknesses that must be most offensive to his stern judgment.” Armance was stifled by her tears. This violent state continued for some hours; it produced a slight touch of fever which won for Armance the permission not to leave her room that evening.

The fever increased, presently an idea came to her: “I am only half despicable, for after all I did not confess in so many words my fatal secret. But after what has happened, I cannot answer for anything. I must erect an eternal barrier between Octave and myself. I must enter religion, I shall choose the order that allows most solitude, a convent situated among high mountains, with a picturesque view. There I shall never hear his name spoken. This is the voice of duty,” the unhappy Armance told herself. From that moment the sacrifice was made. She did not say it to herself, she felt (to express it in detail would have been tantamount to doubting it), she felt this truth: “From the moment when I perceived my duty, not to follow it immediately, blindly, without argument, is to act in a vulgar spirit, is to be unworthy of Octave. How often has he told me that this is the secret sign by which one can recognise a noble spirit! Ah! I will submit to your decree, my noble friend, my dear Octave!” Her fever emboldened her to utter his name in a whisper, and she found happiness in repeating it.

Presently Armance was picturing herself as a nun. There were moments in which she was astonished at the mundane ornaments which decorated her little room. “That fine engraving of the Sistine Madonna which Madame de Malivert gave me, I too must give it away,” she said to herself; “it was chosen by Octave, he preferred it to the Marriage of the Madonna, Raphael’s first painting. Even then I remember that I argued with him over the soundness of his choice, solely that I might have the pleasure of hearing him defend it. Was I in love with him then without knowing it? Have I always loved him? Ah! I must tear that dishonourable passion from my heart.” And the unhappy Armance, trying to forget her cousin, found his memory blended with all the events of her life, even the most insignificant. She was alone, she had sent her maid away, to be able to weep without constraint. She rang the bell and had her engravings carried into the next room. Soon the little room was stripped bare and adorned only with its pretty wallpaper of a lapis-lazuli blue. “Is a nun allowed,” she wondered, “to have a wallpaper in her cell?” She pondered for long over this difficulty; her spirit needed to form an exact idea of the state to which she would be reduced in her cell; her uncertainty in this matter surpassed all other evils, for it was her imagination that was engaged in portraving them. “No,” she said to herself at length, “papers cannot be allowed, they were not invented in the days of the foundresses of the religious orders; these orders come from Italy; Prince Touboskin told us that a white wall, washed every year with lime, is the only

ornament of many beautiful monasteries. Ah!" she went on in her delirium, "I ought perhaps to go and take the veil in Italy; I should make my health an excuse.

"Oh, no. Let me at least not leave Octave's native land, let me at least always hear his tongue spoken." At this moment Méry de Tersan entered the room; the bareness of the walls caught her eye; she turned pale as she approached her friend. Armance, exalted by her fever and by a certain virtuous enthusiasm which was also another way of being in love with Octave, sought to bind her by a confidence. "I wish to become a nun," she said to Méry. "What! Has the sereness of a certain person's heart gone so far as to wound your delicacy?" "Oh, Lord, no, I have no fault to find with Madame de Bonnivet; she is as fond of me as she can be of a penniless girl who has no position in society. Indeed, she is loving to me when things vex her, and could not be kinder to any one than she is to me. I should be unjust, and be shewing a spirit worthy of my position, if I reproached her in the slightest degree." One of the final phrases of this reply drew tears from Méry, who was rich and had the noble sentiments that distinguish her illustrious family. Without conversing save by their tears and the pressure of one another's hand, the friends spent a great part of the evening together. Finally, Armance told Méry all her reasons for retiring to a convent, with one exception: what was to become socially of a penniless girl, who after all could not be given in marriage to a small shopkeeper round the corner? What fate was in store for her? In a convent one is bound only by the rule. If there are not those distractions which we owe to the arts and to the intelligence of people in society, distractions which she enjoyed with Madame de Bonnivet, there is never either the absolute necessity of attracting one person in particular, with humiliation if one does not succeed. Armance would have died of shame sooner than utter the name of Octave. "This is the climax of my misery," she thought, weeping and throwing herself into Méry's arms. "I cannot ask advice even of the most devoted, the most virtuous friendship."

While Armance was weeping in her room, Octave, yielding to an impulse which, for all his philosophy, he was far from explaining to himself, knowing that throughout the evening he would not set eyes on Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, engaged in talk with the women whom as a rule he neglected for the religious argument's of Madame de Bonnivet. For many months now Octave had found himself pursued by advances which were extremely polite

and all the more irritating in consequence. He had become misanthropical and soured; soured like Alceste, on the subject of marriageable daughters. As soon as any one spoke to him of a woman in society whom he did not know, his first remark was: “Has she a daughter to marry?” Latterly, indeed, his prudence had taught him not to be satisfied with an initial reply in the negative. “Madame So-and-So has no daughter to marry,” he would say, “but are you sure there isn’t some niece or other?”

While Armance was being racked by delirium, Octave, who was seeking distraction from the uncertainty in which the incident of the afternoon had plunged him, not only talked to all the women who had nieces, but even tackled several of those redoubtable mothers who have as many as three daughters. Perhaps this display of courage had been rendered easy to him by the sight of the little chair on which Armance generally sat, near Madame de Bonnivet’s armchair; it had just been taken by one of the young ladies de Claix, whose fine German shoulders, benefiting by the lowness of Armance’s little seat, took the opportunity to display all their freshness. “What a difference!” thought or rather felt Octave; “how ashamed my cousin would be of what constitutes the triumph of Mademoiselle de Claix! For her, it is no more than permissible coquetry; it is not even a fault; of this, too, one can say: Noblesse oblige.” Octave set to work to pay court to Mademoiselle de Claix. It would have required some personal motive for trying to understand him or greater familiarity with the habitual simplicity of his expression to detect all the bitterness and scorn that underlay his pretended gaiety. His listeners were kind enough to discover wit in what he said to them; to himself the remarks that received most applause seemed quite commonplace and sometimes even tainted with vulgarity.

As he had not once stopped to talk to Madame de Bonnivet during the evening, when she passed by him she scolded him in a whisper, and Octave apologised for his desertion of her in a speech which the Marquise thought charming. She was highly pleased with the intelligence of her future proselyte, and the self-possessed air which he assumed in society.

She sang his praises with the artless candour of innocence (if the word candour does not blush to see itself employed with reference to a woman who could adopt such charming poses in her bergère and whose eyes were so picturesque when raised to heaven). It must be confessed that at times,

when she gazed fixedly at a gilded ornament on the ceiling of her drawing-room, she would actually say to herself: “There, in that empty space, in that air, there is a Spirit who hears me, magnetises my soul and imparts to it the singular and really quite spontaneous sentiments which I express at times with such eloquence.” That evening, Madame de Bonnivet, highly pleased with Octave and with the thought of the position to which her disciple might one day rise, said to Madame de Claix: “Indeed, the only thing wanting to the young Vicomte was the assurance that is given by wealth. Even if I were not in love with that excellent Law of Indemnity, because it is so fair to our poor emigres, I should love it for the new spirit it has given my cousin.” Madame d’Ancre shot a glance at Madame de Claix and Madame la Comtesse de la Ronze; and as Madame de Bonnivet left these ladies, in order to greet a young Duchesse who was entering the room: “It seems to me to be all quite clear,” she said to Madame de Claix. “All too clear,” the latter replied: “we shall be having a scandal; only a little more friendliness on the part of the astounding Octave, and our dear Marquise will be unable to resist the temptation to take us altogether into her confidence.”

“That is always the way,” went on Madame d’Ancre, “that I have seen these people of pronounced virtue end, who go in for laying down the law about religion. Ah! my dear Mai’quise, blessed is the woman who just listens meekly to her parish priest and offers the holy bread!” “It is certainly better than having Bibles bound by Thouvenin,” put in Madame de Claix. But all Octave’s feigned friendliness had vanished in the twinkling of an eye. He had just caught sight of Méry, who had come down from Armance’s bedroom because her mother had sent for her carriage, and Méry’s face was woebegone. She left so hurriedly that Octave had no opportunity of speaking to her. He himself left immediately after her. It would have been impossible for him from that moment to address a word to any one. The distressed air of Mademoiselle de Tersan told him that something out of the common was happening; perhaps Mademoiselle de Zohiloff was about to leave Paris to escape him. What is truly remarkable is that our philosopher had not the slightest idea that he was genuinely in love with Armance. He had bound himself by the strongest vows to resist that passion, and as what he lacked was penetration rather than character, he would probably have kept his vows.

CHAPTER EIGHT

What shall I do the while? where bide? how live?

Or in my life what comfort, when I am

Dead to him?

CYMBELINE, Act III.

Armance was far from being under any such illusion. It was now a long time since to see Octave had become her one interest in life. When an unexpected turn of fortune had altered her young kinsman's position in society, how her heart had been torn by inward conflicts! What excuses had she not invented for the sudden change that had become apparent in Octave's behaviour! She asked herself incessantly: "Has he a vulgar soul?"

When at length she had succeeded in proving to herself that Octave was capable of feeling other forms of happiness than those arising from money and vanity, a fresh cause of distress seized her attention. "I should be doubly scorned," she said to herself, "were any one to suspect my feelings for him; I, the most penniless of all the girls who come to Madame de Bon-nivet's drawing-room." This utter misery which threatened her from every side, and which ought to have set her to curing herself of her passion, had no effect, but, by inducing in her a profound melancholy, that of abandoning her more blindly than ever to the sole pleasure that remained to her in the world, the pleasure of thinking of Octave.

Every day she saw him for some hours, and the petty incidents of each day affected her mental attitude towards her cousin; how could she possibly be cured? It was from fear of betraying herself and not from scorn that she had taken such good care never to have any intimate conversation with him.

On the day following the explanation in the garden, Octave called twice at the Hôtel de Bonnivet, but Armance did not appear. This strange absence greatly increased his uneasiness as to the favourable or disastrous effect of the step he had ventured to take. That evening, he read his sentence in his cousin's absence and had not the heart to seek distraction in the sound of vain words; he could not bring himself to speak to any one.

Whenever the door of the drawing-room opened, he felt that he was about to die of hope and fear combined; at length one o'clock struck, and it was time to go. As he left the Hôtel de Bonnivet, the hall, the street-front, the black marble lintel of the door, the crumbling wall of the garden, all these things, common enough in themselves, seemed to him to wear a new and special aspect, derived from Armance's anger. Their familiar forms became precious to Octave, owing to the melancholy which they inspired in him. Dare I say that they rapidly acquired in his eyes a sort of tender nobility? He shuddered when next day he detected a resemblance between the old wall of his father's garden, crowned with a few yellow wall-flowers in blossom, and the enclosing wall of the Hôtel de Bonnivet.

On the third day after his venturing to speak to his cousin, he called upon the Marquise, firmly convinced that he had been for ever relegated to the category of mere acquaintance. What was his dismay on, catching sight of Armance at the piano? She greeted him in a friendly fashion. He thought her pale and greatly altered. And yet — and this astonished him greatly and almost restored a glimpse of hope — he thought he could detect in her eyes a certain trace of happiness.

The weather was perfect, and Madame de Bonnivet wished to take advantage of one of the most beautiful mornings of spring to make some long excursion. "Will you be one of us, cousin?" she said to Octave. "Yes, Madame, if it is not to be the Bois de Boulogne, nor the Bois de Mousseaux." Octave knew that Armance disliked both places. "The King's Garden, if we go by the boulevard; will that find favour in your sight?" "It is more than a year since I was last there." "I have never seen the baby elephant," said Armance, jumping for joy, as she went to put on her hat. They set off gaily. Octave was almost beside himself; Madame de Bonnivet drove along the boulevard in an open carriage with her good-looking Octave, This was how the men of their circle who saw them spoke of them. Those

whose livers were out of order gave utterance to melancholy reflexions as to the frivolity of great ladies, who were reverting to the ways of the Court of Louis XV. “In the serious events towards which we are marching,” these poor creatures went on to say, “it is a great mistake to let the Third Estate and the working classes have the advantage of regularity of morals and decent behaviour. The Jesuits are perfectly right to make a point of severity.”

Armance said that her aunt’s bookseller had just sent three volumes entitled History of —— — . “Do you recommend the book?” the Marquise asked Octave. “It is so blatantly praised in the newspapers that I am distrustful of it.” “You will find it very well written, all the same,” Octave told her; “the author knows how to tell a story and he has not yet sold himself to any party.” “But is it amusing?” said Armance. “Plaguily dull,” replied Octave. The talk turned to historical certainty, then to monuments. “Did you not tell me, the other day,” said Madame de Bonnivet, “that there is nothing certain except ancient monuments?” “Yes, for the history of the Romans and Greeks, who were rich people and built monuments; but the libraries contain thousands of manuscripts dealing with the middle ages, and it is only from pure laziness on the part of our so-called scholars that we do not make use of them.” “But those manuscripts are written in such vile Latin,” Madame de Bonnivet went on. “Barely intelligible perhaps to our scholars, but not so bad. You would be highly pleased with the Letters of Heloise to Abelard.” “Their tomb used to be, I have heard, in the Musée Français,”said Armance,”what has become of it?” “It has been set up in Père-Lachaise.” “Let us go and look at it,” said Madame de Bonnivet, and a few minutes later they arrived in that English garden, the only garden of real beauty as a site that exists in Paris. They visited the tomb of Abelard, the obelisk erected to Masséna; they looked for the grave of Labédoyère. Octave saw the spot where rests the young B —— — , and made her an oblation of tears.

Their conversation was serious, grave, but touching in its intensity. Their true feelings came boldly to the surface. As a matter of fact, they touched only upon subjects that were hardly likely to compromise them, but the heavenly charm of candour was none the less keenly felt by the party, when they saw advancing upon them a group the presiding deity of which was the clever Comtesse de G —— — . She came to the place in search of inspiration, she informed Madame de Bonnivet.

At this speech, our friends could barely help smiling; never had the commonness and affectation that underlay the words seemed to them so shocking. Madame de G ——— , like all vulgar French people, exaggerated her impressions in order to create an effect, and the people whose conversation she was interrupting modified their sentiments slightly when they expressed them, not from insincerity but from a sort of instinctive modesty which is unknown among common people, however intelligent they may be.

After a few words of general conversation, as the path was extremely narrow, Octave and Armance found themselves left in the rear.

“You were unwell the day before yesterday,” said Octave; “indeed, your friend Méry’s pallor, when she came down from your room, made me afraid that you must be feeling very ill.”

“I was not ill at all,” said Armance in a tone the lightness of which was a trifle marked, “and the interest which your old friendship takes in all that concerns me, to speak like Madame de G ——— , makes it my duty to tell you the cause of my little disturbance. •For some time past there has been a question of my marriage; the day before yesterday, it was on the point of being broken off, and that is why I was a little upset in the garden. But I beg of you absolute secrecy,” said Armance in alarm as Madame de Bonnivet began to move towards them. “I rely upon eternal secrecy, even from your mother, and especially from my aunt.” This avowal greatly astonished Octave; Madame de Bonnivet having again withdrawn: “Will you permit me to ask one question,” he went on. “Is it purely a marriage of convenience?”

Armance, to whose cheeks the fresh air and exercise had brought the most vivid colours, suddenly turned pale. When forming her heroic project overnight, she had not foreseen this very simple question. Octave saw that he had been indiscreet, and was trying to think of some way of turning the conversation with a jest, when Armance said to him, making an effort to subdue her grief: “I hope that the person in question will deserve your friendship; he has all mine. But, if you please, let us not say any more about this arrangement, which is still perhaps far from complete.” Shortly afterwards, they returned to the carriage, and Octave, who could think of nothing more to say, asked to be set down at the Gymnase.

CHAPTER NINE

Now, peace be here,

Poor house, that keep’st thyself!

CYMBELINE, Act III.

[Beyle ascribes this motto, which he quotes in French, to Burns, thinking possibly of various phrases in the lines To a Field House. In Henri Brulard he again quotes the passage, as from Cymbeline, but gives the speech to Imogen instead of Belarius. — C. K. S. M.]

On the evening before this, after a terrible day of — which we can at the most form a feeble idea by thinking of the state of a poor wretch wholly devoid of courage who is preparing to undergo a surgical operation that often proves fatal, an idea had occurred to Armance: “I am on sufficiently intimate terms with Octave to tell him that an old friend of my family is thinking of marrying me. If my tears betrayed me, this confession will re-establish me in his esteem. My approaching marriage and the anxiety it must be causing me, will make him set my tears down to some allusion a trifle too direct to the position in which I am placed. If he takes any interest in me, alas! he will be cured of it, but at least I can still be his friend; I shall not be banished to a convent and condemned never to set eyes on him again, never once even, for the rest of my life.”

Armance realised, during the days that followed, that Octave was seeking to discover who the favoured suitor might be, “It will have to be some one whom he knows,” she said to herself with a sigh; “my painful duty extends to that also. It is only on those terms that I may still be permitted to see him.”

She thought of the Baron de Risset, who had been a leader in the Vendée, a heroic character, who appeared not infrequently in Madame de Bonnivet's drawing-room, but only to remain silent.

The very next evening, Armance spoke to the Baron of the Memoirs of Madame de Rochejaquelein. She knew that he was jealous of their success; he spoke of them very critically and at great length. "Is Mademoiselle de Zohiloff in love with a nephew of the Baron," Octave asked himself, "or can it be possible that the old General's gallant deeds have made her forget his fifty-five years?" It was in vain that Octave tried to draw the taciturn Baron, who was more silent and suspicious than ever now that he saw himself made the object of these singular attentions.

Some pieces of politeness unduly marked, addressed to Octave by a mother of marriageable daughters, aroused his misanthropy and made him say to his cousin, who was praising the young ladies in question, that even although they had a more eloquent sponsor, he had, thank God, forbidden himself all exclusive admiration until he should reach the age of six and twenty. This unexpected utterance came like a bolt from the blue to Armance; never in all her life had she felt so happy. Ten times perhaps since his change of fortune, Octave had spoken in her hearing of the time at which he would think of marrying. From the surprise which her cousin's words caused her, she realised that she had forgotten all about it.

This moment of happiness was exquisite. Wholly absorbed the day before in the intense pain that is caused by a great sacrifice which must be made to duty, Armance had entirely forgotten this admirable source of comfort. It was forgetfulness of this sort which made her be accused of want of intelligence by those people in society whom the emotions of their hearts leave with the leisure to think of everything. As Octave was just twenty, Armance might hope to be his best friend for six years still, and to be so without remorse. "And who knows," she said to herself, "but I may have the good fortune to die before the end of those six years?"

A new mode of existence began for Octave. Authorised by the confidence which Armance placed in him, he ventured to consult her as to the petty incidents of his life. Almost every evening he had the happiness of being able to talk to her without being actually overheard by the people near them.

He observed with delight that his confidences, however trivial they might be, were never burdensome. To give courage to her diffidence, Armance too spoke to him of her troubles, and a very singular intimacy sprang up between them.

The most blissful love has its storms; one may even say that it lives as much by its terrors as by its felicities. Neither storms nor any uneasiness ever disturbed the friendship of Armance and Octave. He felt that he had no claim upon his cousin; there was nothing that he could have complained of.

Far from exaggerating the gravity of their relations, these delicate natures had never uttered a word on the subject; the word friendship even had never been spoken by either since the confession of her proposed marriage, made by the tomb of Abelard. As, though they met continually, they were rarely able to converse without being overheard, they had always in their brief moments of entire freedom so many things to learn, so many facts to communicate rapidly to one another, that all vain delicacy was banished from their speech.

It must be admitted that Octave would have had difficulty in finding grounds for complaint. All the sentiments that the most exalted, the tenderest, the purest love can bring to life in a woman's heart, Armance felt for him. The hope of death, in which the whole prospect of that love terminated, gave indeed to her speech something heavenly and resigned, quite in keeping with Octave's character.

The tranquil and perfect happiness with which Armance's gentle affection filled him, was felt by him so keenly that he hoped to change his own nature.

Since he had made peace with his cousin, he had never again relapsed into moments of despair, as when he regretted that he had not been killed by the carriage which turned at a gallop into the Rue de Bourbon. He said to his mother: "I am beginning to think that I shall no longer have those fits of rage which made you fear for my reason."

Octave was happier, and became more intelligent. He was astonished to notice in society many things which had never before struck him, though they had long been before his eyes. The world seemed to him less hateful,

and, above all, less intent upon doing him harm. He told himself that, except among the class of pious or plain women, everybody thought far more about himself, and far less about doing harm to his neighbour, than he had supposed at a time when he imagined a world which he did not yet know.

He realised that an incessant frivolity makes any consecutive reasoning impossible; he discovered at last that this world, which, in his insensate pride, he had believed to be arranged in a manner hostile to himself, was simply nothing more than ill arranged. “But,” he said to Armance, “such as it is, one must take it or leave it. One must either end everything swiftly and without delay with a few drops of prussic acid, or else take life gaily.” In speaking thus, Octave was trying to convince himself far more than he was expressing a conviction. His heart was beguiled by the happiness that he owed to Armance.

His confidences were not always free from peril for the girl. When Octave’s reflexions took on a sombre hue; when he was made wretched by the prospect of isolation in time to come, Armance had the greatest difficulty in concealing from him how wretched it would have made her to imagine that she might ever for an instant in her life be parted from him.

“When a man is without friends at my age,” Octave said to her one evening, “can he still hope to acquire Does one love according to plan?” Armance, who felt that her tears were about to betray her, was obliged to leave him abruptly. “I see,” she said to him, “that my aunt wishes to speak to me.”

Octave, his face pressed to the window, continued by himself the course of his sombre reflexions. “It does not do to scowl at the world,” he said to himself at length. “It is so spiteful that it would not deign to notice that a young man, shut up under lock and key on a second floor in the Rue Saint–Dominique, hates it with passion. Alas! One creature alone would notice that I was missing from my place, and her friendship would be distressed”; and he began to gaze across the room at Armance; she was sitting on her little chair beside the Marquise, and seemed to him at that moment ravishingly beautiful. All Octave’s happiness, which he imagined to be so solid and so well assured, depended nevertheless upon the one little word friendship which he had just uttered. It is difficult to escape from the prevailing disease

of one's generation: Octave imagined himself to be philosophical and profound.

Suddenly Mademoiselle de Zohiloff came towards him with an air of uneasiness and almost of anger: "My aunt has just been told," she said to him, "a strange slander at your expense. A serious person, who has never before shewn himself your enemy, came and told her that often at midnight, when you leave this house, you go and end the evening in strange places which are nothing more than gambling rooms.

"And that is not all; in these places, in which the most degrading tone prevails, you distinguish yourself by excesses which astonish their oldest frequenters. Not only are you seen surrounded by women the mere sight of whom is a scandal; but you talk, you hold the ball in their conversation. She went so far as to say that you shine in those places, and by pleasantries, the bad taste of which passes all belief. The people who take an interest in you, for there are such to be found even in those houses, did you the honour at first to take your utterances for acquired wit. 'The Vicomte de Malivert is young,' they said to themselves; 'he must have heard these pleasantries used at some vulgar gathering to stimulate attention and make pleasure sparkle in the eyes of a few coarse men.' But your friends have observed with pain that you take the trouble to invent your most revolting speeches for the occasion. In short, the incredible scandal of your alleged conduct seems to have earned you an unfortunate celebrity among the young men of the worst tone that are to be found in Paris.

"The person who slanders you," continued Armance, whom Octave's obstinate silence was beginning somewhat to disconcert, "ended by giving details which only my aunt's astonishment prevented her from contradicting."

Octave observed with delight that Armance's voice began to tremble during this long speech. "Everything that you have been told is true," he said to her at length, "but it shall never happen again. I will not appear any more in those places in which your friend ought never to have been seen."

Armance's astonishment and distress were intense. For an instant she felt a sentiment akin to contempt. But next day, when she saw Octave again, her

attitude towards what is fitting in the conduct of a young man had quite altered. She found in her cousin's noble confession, and still more in that simple promise made to herself, a reason for loving him all the more. Armance thought that she was being sufficiently severe with herself when she made a vow to leave Paris and never to see Octave again, should he reappear in those houses that were so unworthy of him.

CHAPTER TEN

O conoscenza-t non è senna il suo perché

ché il fedel prête ti chiamo: il più gran dei mali.

Egli era tutto disturbato, e pero non dubi-tava ancora,

al più al più, dubitava di esser presto sul punto

di dubitare. O conoscenza! tu sei fatale a quelli, nei quali

l'oprar segue da vicino il credo.

IL CARDINAL GERDIL.

Need it be said that Octave was faithful to his promise? He abandoned the pleasures proscribed by Armance.

The need for action and the desire to acquire novel experiences had driven him to frequent bad company, often less tedious than good. Now that he was happy, a sort of instinct led him to mix with men; he wished to dominate them.

For the first time, Octave had caught a glimpse of the tedium of too perfect manners and of the excess of cold politeness: bad tone allows a man to talk about himself, in and out of season, and he feels less isolated. After punch had been served in those brilliant saloons at the end of the Rue de Richelieu, which foreigners mistake for good company, one no longer has the sensation: "I am alone in a wilderness of people." On the contrary, he can imagine that he has a score of intimate friends, whose names are unknown to him. May we venture to say, at the risk of compromising at one and the same time both our hero and ourself: Octave thought with regret of several of his supper companions.

The part of his life that had elapsed before his intimacy with the inhabitants of the Hôtel de Bonnivet was beginning to strike him as foolish and marred by misunderstanding. “It rained,” he would say to himself in his original and vivid manner; “instead of taking an umbrella, I used foolishly to lose my temper with the state of the sky, and in moments of enthusiasm for what was beautiful and right, which were after all nothing but fits of madness, I used to imagine that the rain was falling on purpose to do me an ill turn.”

Charmed with the possibility of talking to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff of the observations he had made, like a second Philibert, in certain highly elegant ballrooms: “I found it a little unexpected,” he would say to her. “I no longer find such pleasure in that preeminently good society, of which I was once so fond. It seems to me that beneath a cloak of clever talk it proscribes all energy, all originality. If you are not a copy, people accuse you of being ill-mannered. And besides, good society usurps its privileges. It had in the past the privilege of judging what was proper, but now that it supposes itself to be attacked, it condemns not what is coarse and disagreeable without compensation, but what it thinks harmful to its interests.”

Armance listened coldly to her cousin, and said to him finally: “From what you think today, it is only a step to Jacobinism.” “I should be in despair,” Octave sharply retorted. “In despair at what? At knowing the truth,” said Armance. “For obviously you would not let yourself be converted by a doctrine that was marred by falsehood.” Throughout the rest of the evening, Octave could not help seeming lost in meditation.

Now that he saw society in a rather truer light, Octave was beginning to suspect that Madame de Bon-nivet, for all her supreme pretension of never thinking about the world and of despising success, was the slave of an ambition which made her long for an unbounded success in society.

Certain calumnies uttered by the Marquise’s enemies, which chance had brought to his hearing, and which had seemed to him unspeakably horrible a few months earlier, were now nothing more in his eyes than exaggerations, treacherous or in bad taste. “My fair cousin is not satisfied,” he said to himself, “with illustrious birth, an immense fortune. The splendid existence which her irreproachable conduct, her prudent mind, her wise benevolence assure her is perhaps only a means to her and not an end.

“Madame de Bonnivet requires power. But she is very particular as to the nature of that power. The respect which one obtains from a great position in society, from a welcome at court, from all the advantages that are to be enjoyed under a monarchy no longer means anything to her, she has enjoyed it too long. When one is King, what more can one want? To be God.

“She is satiated with the pleasure that comes from calculated respect, she needs a respect from the heart. She requires the sensation which Mahomet feels when he talks to Seïde, and it seems to me that I have come very near to the honour of being Seide.

[A slave of Mahomet in Voltaire’s tragedy.]

“My fair cousin cannot fill her life with the sensibility that she lacks. She needs, not touching or sublime illusions, not the devotion and passion of one man alone, but to see herself regarded as a Prophetess by a crowd of initiates, and above all, if one of them rebels, to be able to crush him immediately. She has too positive a nature to be content with illusions; she requires the reality of power, and, if I continue to talk to her with an open heart about various things, one day that absolute power may be brought into action against me.

“It is inevitable that she must soon be besieged by anonymous letters; people will reproach her with the frequency of my visits. The Duchesse d’Ancre, irritated by my neglect of her own drawing-room, will perhaps allow herself to make a direct charge. My position is not strong enough to withstand this twofold danger. Very soon, while scrupulously maintaining all the outward forms of the closest friendship, and heaping reproaches on me for the infrequency of my visits, Madame de Bonnivet would put me under the obligation to make them very infrequent indeed.

“For instance, I give the impression of being half converted to this German mysticism; she will ask me to make some public and utterly ridiculous exhibition. If I submit to that, out of friendship for Armance, very soon she will suggest to me something that is quite impossible.”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Somewhat light as air.

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,

Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out

At every joint and motive of her body.

O! These encounterers, so glib of tongue,

That give a coasting welcome ere it comes.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, Act IV.

[The first half-line, which is not in Troilus and Cressida, is perhaps a reminiscence of Othello: "Trifles light as air." — C. K. S. M.]

There were few pleasant drawing-rooms pertaining to that section of society which three times in the year pays its respects to the King in which Octave was not warmly welcomed. He observed the celebrity of Madame la Comtesse d'Aumale. She was the most brilliant and perhaps the cleverest coquette of the day. An ill-humoured foreigner has said that the women of high society in France have a cleverness akin to that of an old Ambassador. It was a childish simplicity that shone in the manners of Madame d'Aumale. The artlessness of her repartees and the wild gaiety of her actions, always inspired by the circumstances of the moment, were the despair of her rivals. She had caprices of a marvellous unexpectedness, and how is any one to imitate a caprice?

The natural and unexpected were by no means the most brilliant element in Octave's behaviour. He was compact of mystery. Never any sign of thoughtlessness in him, unless occasionally in his conversations with

Armance. But he needed to be certain that he would not be interrupted unexpectedly. No one could reproach him with falseness; he would have scorned to tell a lie, but he never went straight towards his goal. Octave took into his service a footman who had come from Madame d'Aumale; this man, an old soldier, was ambitious and cunning. Octave used to make him ride with him on long excursions of seven or eight leagues which he made through the forests round Paris, and there were moments of evident boredom in which the man was allowed to talk. It was barely a matter of weeks before Octave had the most definite information as to Madame d'Aumale's conduct. This young woman, who had compromised herself deeply by an unbounded thoughtlessness, was really entitled to all the esteem which certain people no longer gave her.

Octave calculated, pencil in hand, the amount of time and trouble which Madame d'Aumale's society would require of him, and hoped, without undue effort, to be able before long to pass as a lover of this brilliant woman. He arranged matters so well that it was Madame de Bonnivet herself who, in the course of a party that she was giving at her country house at Andilly, presented him to Madame d'Aumale, and the manner of the presentation was picturesque and impressive for the giddy young Comtesse.

With the object of enlivening a stroll that the party were taking, by night, among the charming woods that crown the height» of Andilly, Octave suddenly appeared disguised as a magician, and was seen in a glare of Bengal lights, cunningly concealed behind the trunks of forest trees. Octave was looking his best that evening, and Madame de Bonnivet, quite unconsciously, spoke of him with a sort of exaltation. Less than a month after this first encounter, people began to say that the Vicomte had succeeded M. de R —— —— and all the rest of them in the post of intimate friend to Madame d'Aumale.

This most frivolous of women, of whom neither she herself nor any one else could ever say what she would be doing in a quarter of an hour, had noticed that a drawing-room clock, when it struck twelve, sent home the majority of the bores in the room, people of regular habits; and so entertained from midnight until two o'clock. Octave was always the last to leave Madame de Bonnivet's drawing-room, and would kill his horses to hasten his arrival at Madame d'Aumale's, in the Chaussée d'Antin. There he found a woman

who thanked heaven for her exalted birth and her fortune, solely because of the privilege they conferred on her, to do at every minute of the day whatever she might be inspired to do by the caprice of the moment.

In the country, at midnight, when every one went up to bed, did Madame d'Aumale remark, as she crossed the hall, a fine night and a pleasing moon, she would take the arm of the young man who, that evening, seemed to her to be the most amusing, and go roaming through the woods. Should some fool offer to accompany her on her stroll, she would beg him without ceremony to choose another path; but next day, should her companion overnight have proved boring, she did not speak to him again. It must be confessed that in the presence of so lively an intelligence, employed in the service of so unbalanced a head, it was very difficult not to seem a trifle dull.

This was what made Octave's fortune; the amusing element of his nature was completely invisible to the people who before taking action always think of a. model to be copied and of the conventions. No one, on the other hand, could be more conscious of this than the prettiest woman in Paris, always in pursuit of some novel idea which might enable her to pass the evening in an exciting way. Octave accompanied Madame d'Aumale everywhere, as for instance to the Italian theatre.

During the two or three final performances given by Madame Pasta, to which the cult of fashion had brought the whole of Paris, he took the trouble to converse aloud with the young Comtesse, and in such a way as to spoil the whole of the show. Madame d'Aumale, amused by what he was saying to her, was delighted by the simple air with which he displayed his impertinence.

Nothing could have seemed in worse taste to Octave; but he was beginning to acquire a mastery of foolish conduct. The twofold attention which, when he took some ridiculous liberty, he gave unconsciously to the impertinence that he was committing and to the sober conduct for which he substituted it, kindled a certain fire in his eyes which, amused Madame d'Aumale. Octave took pleasure in hearing it said on all sides that he was madly in love with the Comtesse, and in never saying anything to this young and charming woman, with whom he spent all his time, that in the remotest degree suggested love.

Madame de Malivert, astonished at her son's conduct, went now and again to the drawing-rooms in which he was to be seen in the train of Madame d'Aumale. One evening, as she left Madame de Bonnivet's, she asked her to let her have Armance for the whole of the next day. "I have a number of papers to arrange, and I need the eyes of my Armance."

On the following morning, at eleven o'clock, before luncheon, as had been arranged, Madame de Malivert's carriage went to fetch Armance: The ladies took luncheon by themselves. When Madame de Malivert's maid was leaving them, "remember," her mistress told her, "that I am at home to nobody, neither to Octave nor to M. de Malivert." She carried her precautions so far as to bolt the door of her outer room herself.

When she was comfortably settled in her bergère, with Armance on her little chair facing her: "My child," she said to her, "I am going to speak to you of a matter which I have long ago decided. But unfortunately my most firm desire is not enough to bring about a result which would be the joy of my life. You have but a hundred louis a year, that is all that my enemies can say against the passionate desire that I fee! to make you marry my son." So saying, Madame de Malivert threw herself into Armance's arms. This was the happiest moment in the poor girl's life; tears of joy bathed her cheeks.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Estamas, linda Ignez, posta em socego

De teus annos colhendo doce fruto

Naquelle engano da alma ledo e cego

Que a fortuna; naô deixa durar muito.

OS LUSIADAS, III.

"But, dear Mama," said Armance, after a long pause, and when they were once more able to talk seriously, "Octave has never told me that he was attached to me as it seems to me that a husband ought to be to his wife." "If I had not to rise from my chair to take you in front of a mirror," replied Madame de Malivert, "I should let you see how your eyes are sparkling with joy at this moment, and should ask you to repeat to me that you are not sure of Octave's heart. I am quite sure of it myself, though I am only his mother. However, I am under no illusion as to the faults that my son may have, and I do not ask for your answer before at least a week has passed." I cannot say whether it was to the Slavonic blood that flowed in her veins, or to her early experience of misfortune that Armance owed her faculty of perceiving in a flash all the consequences that a sudden change in her life might involve. And whether this new state of things were deciding her own fate or that of some one to whom she was indifferent, she saw the outcome with the same clarity of vision. This strength of character or of mind entitled her at once to the daily confidences and to the reprimands of Madame de Bonnivet.

The Marquise consulted her readily as to her own most private arrangements; and at other times would say to her: "A mind like yours is never becoming in a girl."

After the first moment of happiness and profound gratitude, Armance decided that she ought not to say anything to Madame de Malivert of the untrue statement she had made to Octave with regard to a proposal of marriage. “Madame de Malivert has not consulted her son,” she thought, “or else he has concealed from her the obstacle in the way of his plan.” This second possibility made Armance extremely sombre.

She wished to believe that Octave felt no love for her; every day she had need of this certainty to justify in her own eyes any number of attentions which her tender affection allowed her to pay him, and yet this terrible proof of her cousin’s indifference, which came to her thus suddenly, crushed her heart under an enormous weight, and deprived her of the power of speech.

With what sacrifices would not Armance have paid at that moment for the right to weep freely! “If my cousin surprises a tear in my eyes,” she said to herself, “what decisive conclusion will she not feel herself entitled to draw from it? For all I can tell, in her eagerness for this marriage, she may mention my tears to her son, as a proof of my response to his supposed affection.” Madame de Malivert was not at all surprised at the air of profound abstraction which dominated Armance at the end of this day.

The ladies returned together to the Hôtel de Bonnivet, and although Armance had not set eyes on her cousin all day, even his presence, when she caught sight of him in the drawing-room, was powerless to wrest her from her black melancholy. She could barely answer him; she had not the strength to speak. Her preoccupation was plain to Octave, no less than her indifference towards him; he said to her sadly: “To-day you have not time to remember that I am your friend.”

Armance’s only answer was to gaze at him fixedly, and her eyes assumed, unconsciously, that serious and profound expression which had earned her such fine moral lectures from her aunt.

These words from Octave pierced her to the heart. “So he knows nothing of his mother’s intervention, or rather he took no interest in it, and wished only to be a friend.” When, after seeing the guests depart and receiving Madame de Bonnivet’s confidences as to the state of all her various plans, Armance was at length able to seek the solitude of her little room, she found herself a

prey to the most sombre grief. Never had she felt so wretched; never had the act of living so hurt her. With what bitterness did she reproach herself for the novels among whose pages she sometimes allowed her imagination to stray! In those happy moments, she ventured to say to herself: “If I had been born to a fortune, and Octave could have chosen me as his companion in life; according to what I know of his character, he would have found greater happiness with me than with any other woman in the world.”

She was paying dearly now for these dangerous suppositions. Armance’s profound grief did not grow any less in the days that followed; she could not abandon herself for a moment to meditation, without arriving at the most entire disgust with everything, and she had the misfortune to feel her state keenly. The external obstacles in the way of a marriage to which, upon any assumption, she would never have consented, seemed to be smoothed away; but Octave’s heart alone was not on her side.

Madame de Malivert, having seen the dawn of her son’s passion for Armance, had been alarmed by his assiduous courtship of the brilliant Comtesse d’Aumale. But she had only had to see them together to discern that this relation was a duty which her son’s odd nature had imposed on him; Madame de Malivert knew quite well that if she questioned him on the subject, he would tell her the truth; but she had carefully abstained from asking even the most indirect questions. Her rights did not seem to her to extend so far. Out of regard for what she thought due to the dignity of her sex, she had wished to speak of this marriage to Armance before opening the subject with her son, of whose passion she was sure.

Having disclosed her plan to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, Madame de Malivert arranged her time so that she spent hours on end in Madame de Bonnivet’s drawing-room. She thought she could see that something strange was occurring between Armance and her son. Armance was evidently very unhappy. “Can it be possible,” Madame de Malivert asked herself, “that Octave, who adores her and sees her incessantly, has never told her that he is in love with her?”

The day upon which Mademoiselle de Zohiloff was to give her answer had arrived. Early in the morning Madame de Malivert sent round her carriage with a little note in which she invited her to come and spend an hour with

her. Armance arrived with the face of a person who is recovering from a long illness; she would not have had the strength to come on foot. As soon as she was alone with Madame de Malivert, she said to her in the gentlest of tones, beneath which could be seen that firmness which comes of despair: “My cousin has a strain of originality in his character; his happiness requires, and perhaps mine also,” she added, blushing deeply, “that my darling Mama shall never speak to him of a plan which her extreme interest in myself has inspired in her.” Madame de Malivert affected to grant with great reluctance her consent to what was asked of her. “I may die Sooner than I think,” she said to Armance, “and then my son will never win the only woman in the world who can mitigate the despondency of his nature. I am sure that it is the thought of money that has led to your decision,” she said at other moments; “Octave, who has always something to confide in you, cannot have been such a fool as not to confess to you a thing of which I am certain, namely, that he loves you with all the passion of which he is capable, which is saying a great deal, my child. If certain moments of excitement, which become rarer every year, may furnish grounds for sundry objections to the character of the husband I offer you, you will have the comfort of being loved as few women are loved today. In the stormy times that may come upon us, firmness of character in a man will mean a great probability of happiness for his family.

“You yourself know, my Armance, that the external obstacles which crush down common men are nothing to Octave. If his soul is at peace, the whole world banded together against him would not give him a quarter of an hour of unhappiness. Well, I am certain that the peace of his soul hangs upon your consent. Judge for yourself of the ardour with which I ought to plead for him; on you depends my son’s happiness. For four years I thought day and night of how to assure it, I could find no way; at last he fell in love with you. As for myself, I shall be the victim of your exaggerated delicacy. You do not wish to incur the reproach of having married a husband far richer than yourself, and I shall die with the utmost anxiety as to Octave’s future, and without having seen my son united to the woman whom, in my whole life, I have most highly esteemed.”

These assurances of Octave’s love were excruciating to Armance. Madame de Malivert remarked, underlying her young relative’s answers, irritation and wounded pride. That evening, at Madame de Bonnivet’s, she observed that her son’s presence did not at all relieve Mademoisele de Zohiloff of that sort

of misery which springs from the fear of not having shewn sufficient pride towards the person whom one loves, and of having perhaps thus lowered herself in his esteem. “Is a poor girl with no family,” Armance was saying to herself, “the person to be so forgetful?”

Madame de Malivert herself was extremely anxious. After many sleepless nights, she at length arrived at a curious idea, probable however in view of her son’s strange character, that really, just as Armance had said, he had never uttered a word to her of his love.

“Is it possible,” thought Madame de Malivert, “that Octave can be so timid as that? He is in love with his cousin; she is the one person in the world who can ensure him against those fits of melancholy which have made me tremble for him.”

After careful reflexion, she decided upon her course; one day she said to Armance in an indifferent tone: “I cannot think what you have done to my son, to discourage him; but while he admits to me that he has the most profound attachment to you, the most entire esteem, and that to win your hand would be in his eyes the greatest of blessings, he adds that you present an insuperable obstacle to his most cherished ambitions, and that certainly he would not be indebted for you to the persecutions to which we might subject you on his behalf.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Ay! que ya siento en mi cuidoso pecho

Labrarme poco a poco un vivo fuego

Y desde alli con movimiento blando

Ir par venas y huesos penetrando.

ARAUCANA, XXII.

The extreme happiness that shone in Armance's eyes consoled Madame de Malivert, who was beginning to feel some remorse at having introduced a tiny falsehood into so serious a negotiation. "After all," she said to herself, "what harm can there be in hastening the marriage of two charming but rather proud children, who feel a passion for each other such as we rarely see in this world? To preserve my son's reason, is not that my paramount duty?"

The singular course which Madame de Malivert had decided to adopt had delivered Armance from the most profound grief that she had ever felt in her life. A little while since, she had longed for death; and now these words, which she supposed to have been uttered by Octave, placed her on a pinnacle of happiness. She was quite determined never to accept her cousin's hand; but this charming speech allowed her once again to nope for many years of happiness. "I shall be able to love him in secret," she told herself, "during the six years that must pass before he marries; and I shall be fully as happy, and perhaps far happier than if I were his partner. Is it not said that marriage is the grave of love; that there may be agreeable marriages but never one that is really delightful? I should be terrified of marrying my cousin; if I did not see that he was the happiest of men, I should myself be in the depths of despair. If, on the other hand, we continue to live in our pure and holy

friendship, none of the petty concerns of life can ever reach the high level of our feelings to wound them."

Armance weighed in her mind with all the calm of happiness the reasons which she had given herself in the past for never accepting Octave's hand. "I should be regarded in society as a paid companion who had seduced the son of the house. I can hear Madame la Duchesse d'Ancre saying so, and indeed the most honourable women, such as the Marquise de Seyssins, who looks on Octave as a husband for one of her daughters.

"The loss of my reputation would be all the more rapid, from my having lived in the companv of several of the most unimpeachable women in Paris. They can say anything they like about me; their word will be believed. Heavens! Into what an abyss of shame they can hurl me! And Octave might at any time withdraw his esteem from me; for I have no means of defence. What drawing-room is there in which I could make my voice heard? Where are my friends? And besides, after the evident baseness of such an action, what justification would be possible? Even if I had a family, a brother, a father, would they ever believe that, if Octave was in my position and I extremely rich, I should be as devoted to him as I am at this moment?"

Armance had a reason for feeling keenly the kind of indelicacy which money involves. Only a few days earlier, Octave had said to her, speaking of a certain majority vote which had made a stir: "I hope, when I have taken my place in public life, that I shall not allow myself to be bought like those gentlemen. I can live upon five francs a day; and, under an assumed name, it is open to me to earn twice that amount in any part of the world, as a chemist employed in some factory."

Armance was so happy that she did not shrink from examining any objection, however perilous it might be to discuss it. "If Octave preferred me to a fortune and to the support which he is entitled to expect from the family of a wife of his own rank, we might go and live somewhere in retirement. Why not spend ten months of every year on that charming estate Malivert, in Dauphiné, of which he often speaks? The world would very soon forget us. — Yes; but I myself, I should not forget that there was a place on earth where I was despised, and despised by the noblest souls.

“To see love perish in the heart of a husband whom she adores is the greatest of all misfortunes for a young person born to wealth; well, that terrible misfortune fould be as nothing to me. Even if he continued to cherish me, every day would be poisoned by the fear that Octave might come to think that I had chosen him because of the difference in our fortunes. That idea will not come to him spontaneously, I am sure; anonymous letters, like those that are sent to Madame de Bonnivet, will bring it to his notice. I shall tremble at every mail that he receives. No, whatever happens, I must never accept Octave’s hand; and the course that honour prescribes is also the most certain to assure our happiness.”

On the morrow of the day that made Armance so happy, Mesdames de Malivert and de Bonnivet went to stay in the charming house that the Marquise owned near Andilly. Madame de Malivert’s doctors had recommended exercise on horseback and on foot; and on the morning after her arrival she decided to try a pair of charming little ponies which she had procured from Scotland for Armance and herself. Octave accompanied the ladies on their first ride. They had scarcely gone a quarter of a league before he thought he noticed a slight increase of reserve in his cousin’s attitude towards himself, and especially a marked tendency to gaiety.

This discovery gave him much food for thought; and what he observed during the rest of the ride confirmed his suspicions. Armance was no longer the same to him. It was clear that she was going to be married; he was going to lose the only friend that he had in the world. As he was helping Armance to dismount, he found an opportunity to say to her, without being overheard by Madame de Malivert: “I am sorely afraid that my fair cousin is soon going to change her name; that event will deprive me of the only person in the world who has been kind enough to shew me some friendship.” “NEVER,” said Armance, “will I cease to feel for you the most devoted and most exclusive friendship.” But while she was rapidly uttering these words, there was such a look of happiness in her eyes, that Octave, forewarned, saw in them the confirmation of all his fears.

The good nature, the air almost of intimacy with which Armance treated him during their ride on the following day, succeeded in robbing him of all peace of mind: “I see,” he said to himself, “a decided change in Mademoiselle de Zohiloff’s manner; she was extremely agitated a few days ago, now she is

extremely happy. I am ignorant of the cause of this change; therefore it can only be to my disadvantage.

“Who was ever such a fool as to choose for his intimate friend of a girl of eighteen? She marries, and all is over. It is my cursed pride that makes me prepared to die a thousand deaths rather than venture to say to a man the things that I confide in Mademoiselle de Zohiloff.

“Work might offer some resource; but have I not abandoned every reasonable occupation? To tell the truth, for the last six months, has not the effort to make myself agreeable in the eyes of a stupid and selfish world been my only task?” So as to devote himself at any rate to this useful form of boredom, every day, after his mother’s outing, Octave left Andilly and went to pay calls in Paris. He sought new habits to fill the void that would be left in his life by this charming cousin when she withdrew from society to go with her husband; this idea put him in need of violent exercise.

The more his heart was wrung by misery, the more he spoke and sought to please; what he most feared, was finding himself left alone; and, above all, the prospect of the future. He repeated incessantly to himself: “It was childish of me to choose a girl as my friend.” This statement, by its self-evident truth, soon became a sort of proverb in his eyes, and prevented him from proceeding farther with his exploration of his own heart.

Armance, who saw his misery, was moved by it, and often reproached herself for the false admission she had made to him. Not a day passed but, as she saw him set off for Paris, she was tempted to tell him the truth. “But that falsehood is my one weapon against him,” she said to herself; “if I so much as admit to him that I am not engaged, he will implore me to yield to his mother’s wishes, and how am I to resist? And yet, never and upon no pretext must I consent; no, this pretended marriage with a stranger is my sole defence against a happiness that would destroy us both.”

To dissipate the sombre thoughts of this beloved cousin, Armance allowed herself to indulge in the little pleasantries of the most tender friendship. There was such charm, such an artless gaiety in the assurances of undying friendship given him by this girl, so natural in all her actions, that often Octave’s dark misanthropy was disarmed by them. He was happy in spite of

himself; and at such moments nothing was wanting either to complete Armance's happiness.

"How pleasant it is," she said to herself, "to do one's duty! If I were Octave's wife, I, a penniless girl with no family, should I be as well pleased? A thousand cruel suspicions would assail me without ceasing." But, after these moments in which she was satisfied with herself and with the rest of the world, Armance ended by treating Octave more kindly than she intended. She kept a careful watch over her speech; and never did her speech convey anything but the most holy friendship. But the tone in which certain words were uttered! The glance that sometimes accompanied them! Any one but Octave would have been able to read in them an expression of the warmest passion. He enjoyed without understanding them.

As soon as he had granted himself permission to think incessantly of his cousin, his thoughts no longer rested with passion upon anything else in the world. He became once more fair and even indulgent; and his happiness made him abandon his harsh judgments of many things: fools no longer seemed to him anything more than people who had been unlucky from birth.

"Is it a man's fault if he has black hair?" he said to Armance. "But it rests with me carefully to avoid the man if the colour of his hair annoys me."

Octave was considered malicious in certain sections of society, and fools had an instinctive fear of him; at this period they became reconciled with him. Often he took with him into society all the happiness that he owed to his cousin. He was less feared, his affability was felt to be more youthful. It must be admitted that in all his actions there was a trace of that intoxication which springs from that form of happiness which a man does not admit even to himself; life passed rapidly for him and delightfully. His criticisms of himself no longer bore the imprint of that inexorable, harsh logic, taking pleasure in its own harshness, which in his boyhood had controlled all his actions. Beginning often to speak without knowing how his sentence would end. he talked far better than before.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

II giovin cuore o non vede affatto i difetti

di chi li sta vicino o li vede immensi.

Error comune ai giovinetti che portano fuoco nell'

interna dell' anima.

LAMPUGNANI.

One day Octave learned in Paris that one of the men whom he saw most often and took most pleasure in seeing, one of his friends, as the word is used in society, owed the handsome fortune which he spent with such grace to what in Octave's eyes was the basest of actions (legacy hunting). Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, to whom he made haste, immediately on his return to Andilly, to impart this painful discovery, felt that he bore it very well. He underwent no attack of misanthropy, shewed no desire to quarrel openly with the man.

Another day, he returned quite early from a country house in Picardy, where he was to have spent the evening. "How dull all that talk is!" he said to Armance. "Always hunting, the beauty of the country, Rossini's music, the fine arts! Not only that, but they are lying when they pretend to be interested. These people are foolish enough to be frightened, they imagine they are living in a beleaguered city and forbid themselves to discuss the news of the siege. What a miserable race! And how angry it makes me to belong to it!" "Very well! Go and visit the besiegers," said Armance; "their absurdities will help you to endure those of the army in which your birth has enrolled you." "It is a serious question," Octave went on. "Heaven knows what I feel when I hear in one of our drawing-rooms one of our friends give voice to some opinion that is absurd or cruel; still, I can remain honourably silent. My

regret remains invisible. But if I let myself be taken to see the banker Martigny . . . “ “There you are,” said Armance, “a man so refined as he is, so clever, such a slave to his vanity, will receive you with open arms.” “Doubtless; but for my part, however moderate, however modest, however silent I try to make myself, I shall end by expressing my opinion about somebody or something. A moment later, the door of the drawing-room is flung open; the butler announces Monsieur So-and-so, manufacturer at ——— , who in stentorian tones shouts from the threshold: ‘Would you believe it, my dear Martigny, there are ultras, fools enough, stupid enough, idiotic enough to say that . . . ‘ Whereupon the worthy manufacturer repeats, word for word, the little scrap of opinion which I have just announced in all modesty. What am I to do?” “Pretend not to have heard him.” “That is what I should like. I was not put into this world to correct coarse manners or wrong judgments; still less do I wish to give the man, by speaking to him, the right to shake hands with me in the street when next we meet. But in that drawing-room I have the misfortune not to be just like any one else. Would to God that I might find there the equality of which all those gentlemen make so much. For instance, what would you have me do with the title that I bear when I am announced at M. de Martigny’s?” “But it is your intention to discard the title if you can manage to do so without offending your father.” “Doubtless; but to forget the title, in giving my name to M. de Martigny’s servant, might seem, might it not, an act of cowardice? Like Rousseau, who called his dog Turc instead of Duc, because there was a Duke in the room.”

[Like Rousseau, poor Octave is fighting against phantoms. He would have passed unnoticed in any drawing-room in Paris, notwithstanding the prefix to his name. There prevails, moreover, in his sketch of a section of society which he has never seen, an absurd tone of animosity which he will correct in time. Fools are to be found in every class. If there were a class which rightly or wrongly was accused of coarseness, it would very soon be distinguished by a great prudery and solemnity of manners.]

“But there is no such hatred of titles among the Liberal bankers,” said Armance. “The other day Madame de Claix, who goes everywhere, happened to go to the ball at M. Montange’s, and you remember how she made us laugh that evening by pretending that they are so fond of titles that she had heard some one announced as ‘Madame la Colonelle.’”

“Now that the steam engine rules the world, a title is an absurdity, still I am dressed up in this title. It will crush me if I do not support it. The title attracts attention to myself. If I do not reply to the thundering voice of the manufacturer who shouts from the door that what I have just said is asinine, how they will all stare at me. That is the weak point in my nature: I cannot simply twitch my ears and laugh at them, as Madame d’Aumale would suggest.

“If I intercept their stare, all my pleasure is gone for the rest of the evening. The discussion that will then begin in my mind, as to whether they meant to insult me, is capable of destroying my peace of mind for three days.”

“But are you quite certain,” said Armance, “of this alleged coarseness of manners which you so generously attribute to the other side? Did not you see the other day that Talma’s children are boarding at the same school as the sons of a Duke?” “It is the men of forty-five, who became rich during the Revolution, who hold the ball in our drawing-rooms, not the schoolfellows of Talma’s children.” “I would wager that they have more intelligence than many of us. Who is the man who shines in the House of Peers? You yourself made that painful observation the other day.”

“Oh! If I were to give my fair cousin lessons in logic, how I should tease her! What is a man’s intelligence to me? It is his manners that may make me unhappy. The most foolish of our men, M. de —— — , for instance, may be highly ridiculous, but he is never offensive. The other day I was talking at the Aumales’ of my visit to Liancourt; I was talking of the latest machinery which the worthy Duke has imported from Manchester. A man who was in the room said suddenly: ‘It’s not so, that’s not true.’ I was quite sure that he did not mean to contradict me; but his rudeness kept me silent for an hour.”

“And this man was a banker?” “He was not one of us. The amusing thing is, that I wrote to the foreman of the mills at Liancourt, and it appears that my friend who contradicted me was quite wrong.” “I don’t find that M. Montange, the young banker who comes to see Madame de Claix, has rude manners.” “His are honeyed; it is a form that rude manners take, when they are frightened.”

“I think their women very pretty,” Armance went on. “I should like to know whether their conversation is marred by that note of hatred or of dignity that is afraid of being wounded, which appears at times among us. Oh, how I wish that a good judge like my cousin could tell me what goes on in those drawing-rooms! When I see the bankers’ ladies in their boxes, at the Théâtre-Italien, I am dying with longing to hear what they say and to join in their conversation. If I catch sight of a pretty one, and some of them are charming, I long to throw my arms round her neck. All this will seem childish to you; but to you, master philosopher, who are so strong in logic, I will say this: how are you to know mankind if you see only one class? And the class that is least energetic because it is the farthest removed from any real needs!”

“And the class that has most affectation, because it thinks that people are watching it. You must admit that it is amusing to see a philosopher supply his adversary with arguments,” said Octave, laughing. “Would you believe that yesterday, at the Saint–Imiers’, M. le Marquis de ——— — , who, the other day, in this house, made such fun of the little newspapers, and pretended not to know of their existence, was in the seventh heaven, because l’Aurore had printed a vulgar joke about his enemy, M. le Comte de ——— — , who has just been made a Privy Councillor? He had the paper in his pocket.”“It is one of the drawbacks of our position, to have to listen to fools telling the most ridiculous lies and not be able to say: ‘A fine disguise, I know you.’” “We are obliged to deny ourselves the best jokes, because they might make the other side laugh if they heard them.”

“I know the bankers,” said Armance, “only from our silvery Montange and that charming comedy Le Roman; but I doubt whether, as far as the worship of money is concerned, they are any worse than some of our own people. You know that it is a hard task to maintain the perfection of a whole class. I shall say no more of the pleasure it would give me to know more about their ladies. But, as the old Duc de ——— ——— said at Petersburg, when he had the Journal de l’Empire sent to him at such expense, and at the risk of offending the Tsar Alexander: ‘Ought one not to read what the other side has to say?’” “I will go a great deal farther, but in confidence, as Talma says so perfectly in Polyeucte: You and I, in our hearts, do not, certainly, wish to live among these people; but on many questions we think as they do.” “And it is sad at our age,” Armance put in, “to have to resign ourselves to being for the rest of our lives on the defeated side.”

“We are like the priests of the heathen idols, at the time when the Christian religion was beginning to triumph. We still persecute today, we still have the police and the budget on our side, but tomorrow, perhaps, we shall be persecuted by public opinion.” “You do us a great honour when you compare us to those worthy priests of paganism. I see something even more false in our position, yours and mine. We belong to our party only to share its misfortunes.” “That is all too true, we see its absurdities without daring to laugh at them, and its advantages are a burden to us. How does the antiquity of my name help me? It would be a nuisance to me to derive any benefit from that advantage.”

“The conversation of the young men of your sort makes you sometimes want to shrug your shoulders, and, afraid of yielding to the temptation, you are always in a hurry to speak of Mademoiselle de Claix’s beautiful album or of Madame Pasta’s singing. On the other hand, your title and the manners, which are slightly rough perhaps, of the people who think like you on most questions prevent you from seeing them.”

“Ah, how I should love to command a gun or a steam engine! How glad I should be to be a chemist employed in some factory; for rude manners are nothing to me, one grows accustomed to them in a week.” “Apart from the fact that you are by no means so certain that they are so rude,” said Armance. “Were they ten times more so,” replied Octave, “there is the excitement of trying a foreign language; but one would have to be called M. Martin or M. Lenoir.” “Could you not find a man of sense who had made a tour of discovery in the Liberal drawing-rooms?” “Many of my friends go there to dance, they say that the ices there are perfect, and that is all. One fine day I may venture there myself, for there is nothing so foolish as to think for a vear on end of a danger which perhaps does not exist.”

In the end, Armance extracted the admission that he had thought of a way of appearing in those circles in which it is wealth that confers precedence and not birth: “Well, yes, I have found a way,” said Octave; “but the remedy would be worse than the disease, for it would cost me several months of my life, which I should have to spend away from Paris.”

“What is your way?” said Armance, growing suddenly quite serious. “I should go to London, I should see there, naturally, all the most distinguished

elements of society. How can one go to England and not be introduced to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Mr. Brougham, Lord Holland? These gentlemen will talk to me of our famous men in France; they will be surprised to hear that I do not know them; I shall express deep regret; and, on my return, I shall have myself introduced to all the most popular people in France. My action, if they do me the honour to mention it at the Duchesse d'Ancre's, will not seem in the least an abandonment of the ideas which they may suppose to be inseparable from my name: it would be simply the quite natural desire to know the superior people of the age in which we live. I shall never forgive myself for not having met General Foy." Armance remained silent.

"Is it not humiliating," Octave went on, "that all our supporters, even the monarchist writers whose duty it is to preach every morning in the newspaper the advantages of birth and religion, are furnished us by that class which has every advantage, except that of birth?" "Ah, if M. de Soubirane were to hear you!" "Do not attack me upon the greatest of all my misfortunes, that of being obliged to lie all day long. . . ."

The tone of perfect intimacy allows endless parentheses, which give pleasure because they are a proof of an unbounded confidence, but may easily bore a third person. It is enough for us to have shewn that the brilliant position of the Vicomte de Malivert was far from being a source of unmixed pleasure to him.

It is not without danger that we have been faithful chroniclers. The intrusion of politics into so simple a narrative may have the effect of a pistol shot in the middle of a concert. Moreover, Octave is no philosopher, and has characterised most unfairly the two shades of opinion which, in his day, bisect society. How scandalous that Octave does not reason like a sage of fifty.

[We are not sufficiently grateful to the Villèle Ministry. The Three Per Cents, the Law of Primogeniture, the Press Laws have brought about a fusion of parties. The inevitable relations between the Peers and the Deputies began this reconciliation which Octave could not have foreseen, and fortunately the ideas of this proud and timid young man are even less true today than they were a few months ago; but this is how he was bound to see things, given his

character. Must we leave unfinished the sketch of an eccentric character because he is unfair to every one? It is precisely this unfairness that is his misfortune.]

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

How am I glutted with conceit of this!

Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,

Resolve me of all ambiguities,

Perform what desperate enterprise I will?

DOCTOR FAUSTUS.

Octave was so much in the habit of leaving Andilly to visit Madame d'Aumale in Paris, that one day a slight feeling of jealousy began to quench Armance's gaiety. On her cousin's return, that evening, she exercised her authority. "Do you wish to oblige your mother in a matter which she will never mention to you?" "Of course." "Very well, for the next three months, that is to say for ninety days, do not refuse any invitation to a ball, and do not come away from a ball until you have danced."

"I should prefer a fortnight's imprisonment." "You are easily satisfied," Armance went on, "but do you promise me, or do you not?" "I promise anything except to keep my promise for three months. Since you all tyrannise over me here," said Octave with a laugh, "I shall run away. There is an old idea of mine which quite spontaneously kept coming into my mind throughout the evening yesterday, at M. de —— —'s sumptuous party, at which I danced as though I had guessed your orders. If I were to leave Andilly for six months I have two plans more amusing than that of going to England.

"One is to assume the name of M. Lenoir; under that fine name, I should go into the country and give lessons in arithmetic, in geometry applied to the arts, anything they want to leam. I should make my way by Bourges, Aurillac, Cahors; I should easily procure letters from any number of Peers

who are Members of the Institute, recommending to the Prefects the learned royalist Lenoir, and so forth.

“But the other plan is better still. In my capacity as a teacher, I should see only a lot of enthusiastic and volatile young fellows who would soon bore me, and various intrigues by the Congregation.

“I hesitate to reveal to you the better plan of the two; I should assume the name of Pierre Gerlat, I should start at Geneva or Lyons by becoming valet to some young man who is destined to play a part more or less identical with my own in society. Pierre Gerlat would be provided with excellent testimonials from the young Vicomte de Malivert, whose faithful servant he had been for six years. In a word, I should assume the name and identity of that poor Pierre whom I once threw out of the window. Two or three men of my acquaintance will oblige me with testimonials. They will seal these with their arms upon huge lumps of wax, and in that way I hope to find a place with some young Englishman, either very rich or the son of a Peer. I shall take care to stain my hands with an acid solution. I have learned how to clean boots from the servant I have now, the gallant Corporal Voreppe. In the last three months I have stolen all his talents.”

“One evening your roaster, when he comes home tipsy, will start kicking Pierre Gerlat.”

“Were he to throw me out of the window, I am prepared for that. I shall defend myself, and give him notice the next day, and bear him no grudge whatever.”

“You would be guilty of an abuse of confidence which would be very wrong indeed; A man exposes the defects of his nature to a young peasant who is incapable of understanding his most salient eccentricities, but he would take good care, I am sure, not to act thus before a man of his own class.” “I shall never repeat what I have seen or heard. Anyhow, a master, to talk like Pierre Gerlat, always runs the risk of hitting upon a rascal, mine will only find curiosity. Realise what I am suffering,” Octave went on. “My imagination is so foolish at certain moments, and so far exaggerates what I owe to my position, that, without being a Sovereign Prince, I long for an incognito. I am supreme in misery, in absurdity, in the extreme importance that I attach to

certain things. I feel a compelling need to see another Vicomte de Malivert in my place. Since, unfortunately, I have embarked on this career, since, to my great and sincere regret, I cannot be the son of the chief foreman of M. de Lian-court's carding mill, I require six months of domestic service to cure the Vicomte de Malivert of various weaknesses.

"This is the only way; my pride raises a wall of adamant between myself and my fellow men. Your presence, my dear cousin, makes this unsurmountable wall disappear. In conversation with you, I should take nothing in ill part, such serenity does your presence give to my soul, but unfortunately I have not the magic carpet to take you everywhere with me. I cannot see you as a third person when I go riding in the Bois de Boulogne with one of my friends. Soon after our first meeting, there is none of them who is not estranged by my talk. When, after a year, and in spite of anything I can do, they understand me thoroughly, they wrap themselves up in the closest reserve, and would rather (I really believe) that their secret thoughts and actions were known to the devil than to me. I would not swear that many of them do not take me for Lucifer himself (as M. de Soubirane says, in fact, it is one of his favourite remarks) brought into the world on purpose to torment them."

Octave imparted these strange ideas to his cousin as they strolled in the woods of Moulignon, in the wake of Mesdames de Bonnivet and de Malivert. These oddities distressed Armance deeply. Next day, after her cousin had left for Paris, her free and lively air which often became quite unrestrained gave way to that fixed and tender gaze from which Octave, when he was present, could not tear his own.

Madame de Bonnivet invited a number of guests, and Octave no longer had such frequent reasons for going to Paris, for Madame d'Aumale came to stay at An-dilly. With her there arrived seven or eight women at the height of the fashion, and mostly remarkable for the brilliance of their wit or for the influence that they had obtained in society. But their affability only enhanced the triumph of the charming Comtesse; her mere presence in a drawing-room aged her rivals.

Octave was too intelligent not to feel this, and Armance's spells of musing became more frequent. "Of whom have I the right to complain?" she asked

herself. “Of no one, and of Octave least of all. Have I not told him that I prefer another man? And there is too much pride in his nature to be content with the second place in a heart. He is attached to Madame d’Aumale; she is a brilliant beauty, spoken of everywhere, and I am not even pretty. Anything that I can say to Octave can be but faintly interesting, I am certain that often I bore him, or am interesting only as a sister. Madame d’Aumale’s life is gay, unusual; things never flag where she is to be found, and it seems to me that I should often be bored in my aunt’s drawing-room if I listened to what people say there.” Armance wept, but her noble soul did not so far debase itself as to feel hatred for Madame d’Aumale. She observed every action of that charming lady with a profound attention which ended often in moments of keen admiration. But each act of admiration was like a dagger thrust in her heart. Her peaceful happiness vanished, Armance was a prey to all the anguish of the passions. Finally, Madame d’Aumale’s presence disturbed her more than that of Octave himself. The torture of jealousy is most unbearable when it is rending hearts to which their natural inclination as well as their social position forbid every way of appeal that is at all dangerous.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch

Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.

Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike

Feeds beast as man: the nobleness of life

Is to love thus.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, Act I.

One evening after a day of stifling heat, they were strolling quietly amid the handsome groves of chestnuts that crown the heights of Andilly. Sometimes during the day these woods are spoiled by the intrusion of strangers. On this charming night, bathed in the calm light of a summer moon, these deserted slopes were an enchantment to the eye. They assumed a certain grandeur, the dark shadows cast by a brilliant moon eliminated their details. A soft breeze was playing among the trees, and completed the charms of this delicious evening. >From some caprice or other, Madame d'Aumale was determined, on this occasion, to keep Octave by her side; she reminded him coaxingly and without the slightest regard for her male escort, that it was in these woods that she had seen him for the first time: "You were disguised as a magician, and never was a first meeting more prophetic," she went on, "for you have never bored me, and there is no other man of whom I can say that."

Armance, who was walking with them, could not help feeling that these memories were very affectionate. Nothing could be so pleasant as to hear this brilliant Comtesse, so gay as a rule, deigning to speak in serious tones of the great interests of life and of the courses that one must follow to find any happiness here below. Octave withdrew from Madame d'Aumale's group, and, finding himself presently alone with Armance some little way from the

rest of the party, began to relate to her in the fullest detail the whole of the episode of his life in which Madame d'Aumale had been involved. "I sought that brilliant connexion," he told her, "in order not to offend Madame de Bonnivet, who, but for some such precaution, might easily have finished by banishing me from her society." So tender a confidence as this was made without any mention of love, but it was exactly attuned to Armance's jealousy.

When Armance was able to hope that her voice would not betray the extreme distress in which this confession had plunged her: "I believe, my dear cousin," she said to him, "I believe, as I am bound to believe, everything that you tell me; your word to me is as the Gospel. I observe, however, that you have never until now waited, before taking me into your confidence about any of your enterprises, until it was so far advanced." "To that, I have my answer ready. Mademoiselle Méry de Tersan and you take the liberty sometimes of laughing at my success: one evening, for instance, two months ago, you almost accused me of fatuity. I might easily, even then, have confessed to you the decided feeling that I have for Madame d'Aumale; but I should have had to be treated kindly by her in your presence. Before I had succeeded, your malicious wit would not have failed to deride my feeble efforts. To-day, the presence of Mademoiselle de Tersan is the only thing lacking to complete my happiness."

There was in the profound and almost tender accents with which Octave uttered these vain words, such an incapacity to love the somewhat bold charms of the pretty woman of whom he was speaking, and so passionate a devotion to the friend in whom he was confiding that she had not the courage to resist the happiness of seeing herself so dearly loved. She leaned upon Octave's arm, and listened to him as though in an ecstasy. All that her prudence could obtain of her was to refrain from speaking; the sound of her voice would have revealed to her companion the whole extent of the passion by which she was torn. The gentle rustle of the leaves, stirred by the night breeze, seemed to lend a fresh charm to their silence.

Octave gazed into Armance's open eyes which were fastened on his own. Suddenly they became aware of a certain sound which for some minutes had reached their ears without attracting their attention. Madame d'Aumale, surprised at Octave's absence, and feeling the need of his company, was

calling to him at the top of her voice. “Some one is calling you,” said Armance, and the broken accents in which she uttered these simple words would have enlightened any one but Octave as to the passion that she felt for himself. But he was so astonished by what — was going on in his heart, so disturbed by Armance’s shapely arm, barely veiled by a light gauze, which he was pressing to his bosom, that he could pay no attention to anything. He was beside himself, he was tasting the pleasures of the most blissful love, and almost admitted as much to himself. He looked at Armance’s hat, which was charming, he gazed into her eyes. Never had Octave found himself in a position so fatal to his vows to refrain from love. He had meant to speak lightly to Armance, as usual, and his light speech had suddenly taken a grave and unexpected turn. He felt himself led away, he was incapable of reason, he was raised to the pinnacle of happiness. It was one of those rapid instants which chance accords now and again, in compensation for so many hardships, to natures that are created to feel with energy. Life becomes pressing in the heart, love makes us forget everything that is not divine like itself, and we live more fully in a few moments than in long periods.

They could still hear from time to time Madame d’Aumale’s voice calling: “Octave!” and the sound of that voice succeeded in destroying all poor Armance’s prudence. Octave felt that it was time to let go the fair arm that he was pressing gently to his bosom; he must part from Armance; on leaving her he could hardly refrain from taking her hand and pressing it to his lips. Had he permitted himself this token of love, Armance was so disturbed at the moment, that she would have let him see and would perhaps have admitted all that she felt for him.

They rejoined the rest of the party. Octave walked a little way ahead. As soon as Madame d’Aumale caught sight of him, she said to him with a trace of vexation, not loud enough for Armance to hear: “I am surprised to see you so soon, how could you leave Armance for me? You are in love with that pretty cousin, do not attempt to deny it; I know.” The last words were uttered in a loud voice in contrast to her previous tone.

Octave had not yet recovered from the intoxication that had overpowered him; he still saw Armance’s beautiful arm pressed to his bosom. Madame d’Aumale’s speech fell on him like a thunderbolt, for it came with the force of truth. He felt the shock of its impact. That frivolous voice seemed to him

a pronouncement of fate, falling on him from the clouds. The sound of it seemed to him extraordinary. This startling speech, by revealing to Octave the true state of his heart, dashed him from a pinnacle of bliss into a frightful, hopeless misery.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

What is a man, If his chief good and market of his

time lie but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more. . . .

Rightly to be great

Is not to stir without great argument,

But greatly to find honour in a straw

When honour's at the stake.

HAMLET, Act IV.

And so he had been so weak as to violate the oaths he had so often sworn! A single moment had upset the work of his whole life. He had forfeited all right to his own esteem. Henceforward the world of men was closed to him; he was not worthy to inhabit it. Nought remained to him but solitude and a hermit's abode in some wilderness. The intensity of the grief that he felt and its suddenness might well have caused some disturbance in the stoutest heart. Fortunately Octave saw at once that if he did not reply quickly and with the calmest air to Madame d'Aumale, Armance's reputation might suffer. He spent all his time with her, and Madame d'Aumale's speech had been seized upon by two or three people who detested him as well as Armance.

"I, in love!" he said to Madame d'Aumale. "Alas! That is a privilege which heaven has evidently denied me; I have never felt it so plainly nor so keenly regretted it. I see every day, though less often than I could wish, the most attractive woman in Paris; to win her favour is doubtless the most ambitious project that a man of my age can entertain. Doubtless she would not have accepted my devotion; still, I have never felt myself moved to the degree of

enthusiasm which would make me worthy to offer it to her. Never, in her presence, have I lost the most complete self-possession. After such a display of savagery and insensibility, I despair of ever going out of my depth with any woman."

Never had Octave spoken to such effect. This almost diplomatic explanation was skilfully protracted and received with a corresponding eagerness. There were present two or three men who were naturally attractive, and who often imagined that they saw in Octave a fortunate rival. He was delighted to overhear several sharp comments. He spoke volubly, continued to alarm their self-esteem, until he felt himself justified in hoping that no one would pay any further attention to the all too true observation which Madame d'Aumale had let fall.

She had uttered it with an air of conviction; Octave felt that he must force her to think of herself. Having proved to her that he was incapable of loving her, for the first time in his life he allowed himself to address to Madame d'Aumale allusions that were almost affectionate; she was amazed.

Before the evening ended, Octave was so confident of having banished all suspicions that he began to have time to think of himself. He dreaded the moment when the party would break up, and he would be free to look his misery in the face. He began to count the hours as they sounded from the clock in Andilly; midnight had long since struck, but the night was so fine that they preferred to remain out of doors. One o'clock struck, and Madame d'Aumale dismissed her retinue.

Octave had still a momentary respite. He must go and find his mother's footman and tell him that he was going to sleep in Paris. This duty performed, he returned to the woods, and here words fail me if I am to give any idea of the grief that overpowered the poor wretch. "I am in love," he said to himself in stifled accents. "I, in love! Great God!" and with throbbing heart, parched throat, staring eyes raised to heaven, he stood motionless, as though horror-stricken; presently he began to walk at a headlong pace. Unable to hold himself erect, he let himself fall against the trunk of an old tree that barred his way, and in that moment of repose seemed to see more clearly than ever the whole extent of his misery.

“I had nothing but my own self-esteem,” he said to himself; “I have forfeited it.” The confession of his love which he made in the plainest terms and without finding any way of denying it was followed by transports of rage and inarticulate cries of fury. Spiritual agony can go no farther.

An idea, the common resource of the wretched who have still some courage, soon occurred to him; but he said to himself: “If I take my life, Armance will be compromised; the whole of society for the next week will be nosing out every trifling detail of what occurred this evening. Armance will be in despair, her despair will be noticed, and each of the gentlemen who was present will be authorised to furnish a different account.”

Nothing selfish, no attachment to the vulgar interests of life, could be found in this noble spirit to resist the transports of the frightful grief which was rending it. This absence of all common interest, capable of providing a diversion at such moments, is one of the punishments which heaven seems to take pleasure in inflicting upon lofty spirits.

The hours glided rapidly by without diminishing Octave’s despair. Remaining motionless at times for several minutes, he felt that fearful anguish which completes the torment of the greatest criminals: an utter contempt for himself.

He could not weep. The hatred of which he felt himself so deserving prevented him from having any pity for himself, and dried his tears. “Ah!” he cried, in one of those agonising moments, “if I could make an end!” and he gave himself leave to taste the ideal happiness of ceasing to feel. With what pleasure would he have put himself to death, as a punishment of his weakness and to retrieve in a sense his lost honour! “Yes,” he told himself, “my heart deserves contempt because it has committed an action which I had forbidden myself on pain of death, and my mind is, if possible, even more contemptible than my heart. I have failed to see what was self-evident: I love Armance, and I have loved her ever since I submitted to listening to Madame de Bonnivet’s dissertations upon German philosophy.

“I was foolish enough to imagine myself a philosopher. In my idiotic presumption, I regarded myself as infinitely superior to the futile arguments of Madame de Bonnivet, and I failed to see in my heart what the weakest of

women would have seen in hers: a strong, obvious passion, which for long has destroyed all the interest that I used to take in the things of life.

“Everything that cannot speak to me of Armance is to me as though it did not exist. I criticised myself incessantly, and failed to see this! Ah, how contemptible I am!”

The voice of duty which was beginning to prevail ordered Octave to shun Mademoiselle de Zohiloff from that instant; but out of her presence he could think of no action that justified the effort of living. Nothing seemed to him worthy to inspire the least interest in him. Everything appeared to him to be equally insipid, the noblest action and the most vulgarly useful occupation alike: to march to the aid of Greece and to seek death by the side of Fabvier, as to make obscure agricultural experiments in some remote Department.

His imagination ran swiftly over the scale of possible actions, to fall back afterwards with an intenser grief into the most profound despair, the most hopeless, the worthiest of his name; ah, how pleasant would death have been at those moments!

Octave uttered aloud things that were foolish and in bad taste, the bad taste and folly of which he observed with interest. “What use in shutting my eyes to the facts,” he exclaimed suddenly, while he was occupied in enumerating to himself certain agricultural experiments that might be made among the peasants of Brazil. “What use in being so cowardly as to shut my eyes to the facts? To complete my misery, I can say to myself that Armance feels some affection for me, and my duty is all the stricter in consequence. Why, if Armance were engaged, would the man to whom she had promised her hand permit her to spend all her time with me? And her joy, outwardly so calm, but so deep and true, when I revealed to her last night the secret plan of my conduct with Madame d’Aumale, to what must it be ascribed? Is it not a proof positive, as plain as daylight? And I was blind to it! Can I have been a hypocrite with myself? Can I have been treading the path which the vilest scoundrels have followed? What! Last night, at ten o’clock, I failed to perceive a thing which this morning seems as plain as possible? Ah, how weak and contemptible I am!

“I have all the pride of a child, and never in my whole life have I risen to perform one manly action; not only have I wrought my own undoing, I have dragged down into the abyss her who was dearer to me than any one in the world. Oh, heavens! How could any one, even if he tried, be viler than I?” This thought left him almost delirious. Octave felt his brain melt in the fiery heat of his head. At each step that his mind advanced, he discovered a fresh variety of misery, a fresh reason for despising himself.

The instinct of self-preservation which exists in every man, even in the most painful moments, even at the foot of the scaffold, made Octave try to prevent himself from thinking. He clasped his head in his hands, making almost a physical effort not to think.

Gradually everything lost its importance for him, except the memory of Armance whom he must evermore avoid, and never see again upon any pretext whatsoever. Even filial love, so deeply rooted in his heart, had vanished from it.

He had now only two ideas, to leave Armance and never allow himself to set eyes on her again; to support life on these conditions for a year or two until she were married or society had forgotten him. After which, as people would then have ceased to think of him, he would be free to put an end to himself. Such was the last conscious thought of this spirit exhausted by suffering. Octave leaned against a tree and fell in a swoon.

When he regained consciousness, he felt an unusual sense of cold. He opened his eyes. Day was beginning to dawn. He found that he was receiving the attentions of a peasant who was trying to restore his consciousness by deluging him with cold water which he fetched in his hat from a neighbouring spring. Octave was confused for a moment, his ideas were not clearly defined: he found himself lying upon the bank of a ditch, in the middle of a clearing, in a wood; he saw great rounded masses of mist pass rapidly before his eyes. He could not tell where he was.

Suddenly the thought of all his misfortunes recurred to his mind. People do not die of grief, or he would have been dead at that moment. A groan or two escaped him which frightened the peasant. The man’s alarm recalled Octave to a sense of duty. It was essential that this peasant should not talk. Octave

took out his purse to offer him some money; he said to the man, who seemed to feel some compassion for his state, that he found himself in the woods at that hour in consequence of a rash wager, and that it was most important to him that it should not be known that the cold night air had upset him.

The peasant appeared not to understand. “If the others hear that I fainted,” said Octave, “they will make fun of me.” “Ah, I understand,” said the peasant, “count on me not to breathe a word, it shall never be said that I made you lose your wager. It is lucky for you all the same that I happened to pass, for, upon my soul, you looked half dead.” Octave, instead of replying, was gazing at his purse. This was a further grief, the purse was a present from Armance; he found a pleasure in feeling with his fingers each of the little steel beads that were stitched to the dark tissue.

As soon as the peasant had left him, Octave broke off a branch of a chestnut tree, with which he made a hole in the ground; he allowed himself to bestow a kiss on the purse, Armance’s present, and buried it beneath the very spot on which he had fainted. “There,” he said to himself, “my first virtuous action. Farewell, farewell for life, dear Armance! God knows that I loved thee!”

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

On her white breast a sparkling

Cross she wore,

Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.

POPE.

[Beyle quotes this motto in French, and attributes it to Schiller. — C. K. S. M.]

A instinctive movement impelled him towards the house. He felt confusedly that to reason with himself was the greatest misfortune possible; but he had seen where his duty lay, and hoped to find the necessary courage to perform such actions as fell to his lot, whatever they might be. He found an excuse for his return to the house, which was prompted by his horror of loneliness, in the idea that some servant might arrive from Paris and report that he had not been seen in the Rue Saint–Dominique, which might lead to the discovery of his foolish conduct, and cause his mother some uneasiness.

Octave was still some way from the house: “Ah,” he said to himself as he walked home through the woods, “only yesterday there were boys here shooting; if a careless boy, firing at a bird from behind a hedge, were to kill me, I should have no complaint to make. Heavens! How delightful it would be to receive a bullet in this burning brain! How I should thank him before I died, if I had time!”

We can see that there was a trace of madness in Octave’s attitude this morning. The romantic hope of being killed by a boy made him slacken his step, and his mind, with a slight weakness of which he was barely conscious, refused to consider whether he were justified in so doing. At length he arrived at the house by the garden gate, and twenty yards from that gate, at a

turn in a path, saw Armance. He stood rooted to the ground, the blood froze in his veins, he had not expected to come upon her so soon. As soon as she caught sight of him, Armance hastened towards him smiling; she had all the airy grace of a bird; never had she seemed to him so pretty; she was thinking of what he had said to her overnight about his intimacy with Madame d'Aumale.

"So I am beholding ner for the last time!" Octave said to himself, and gazed at her hungrily. Armance's wide-brimmed straw hat, her light and supple form, the long ringlets that dangled over her cheeks in charming contrast to a gaze so penetrating and at the same time so gentle, he sought to engrave all these upon his heart. But her smiling glances, as Armance approached him, soon lost all their joy. She felt there was something sinister in Octave's manner. She noticed that his clothes were wringing wet.

She said to him in a voice tremulons with emotion: "What is the matter, cousin?" As she uttered this simple speech, she could hardly restrain her tears, so strange was the expression she discerned in his gaze.

"Mademoiselle," he replied with a glacial air, "you will permit me to be not unduly sensible of an interest which attaches itself to me so as to deprive me of all freedom. It is true, I have come from Paris; and my clothes are wet: if this explanation does not satisfy your curiosity, I shall go into details. . . . " Here Octave's cruelty came to a standstill in spite of himself.

Armance, whose features had assumed a deathly pallor, seemed to be making vain efforts to withdraw; she was shaking visibly, and seemed to be on the point of falling. He stepped forward to offer her his arm; Armance gazed at him with lifeless eyes, which moreover seemed incapable of receiving any idea.

Octave seized her hand none too gently, placed it beneath his arm and strode towards the house. But he felt that his strength too was failing; on the point of falling himself, he yet had the courage to say to her: "I am going away, I have to start on a long voyage to America; I shall write; I rely upon you to comfort my mother; tell her that I shall certainly return. As for you, Mademoiselle, people have said that I am in love with you; I am far from making any such pretension. Indeed, the old ties of friendship that bound us

should have been sufficient, to my mind, to resist the birth of love. We know each other too well to feel for each other that sort of sentiment, which always implies a certain amount of illusion."

At that moment Armance found herself incapable of walking; she raised her drooping eyes and looked at Octave; her pale and trembling lips seemed to be trying to speak. She attempted to lean upon the tub of an orange tree, but had not the strength to support herself; she slipped to the ground by the side of the orange tree, completely unconscious.

Without offering her any assistance, Octave stood motionless and gazed at her; she was in a dead faint, her lovely eyes were still half open, the lines of that charming mouth retained an expression of profound grief. All the rare perfection of her delicate body was revealed beneath a simple morning gown. Octave noticed a small cross of diamonds which Armance was wearing that day for the first time.

He was so weak as to take her hand. All his philosophy had evaporated. He saw that the tub of the orange tree concealed her from the curiosity of the people in the house; he fell on his knees by her side: "Pardon me, O my dear angel," he said in a low murmur, covering her frozen hand with kisses, "never have I loved thee more!"

Armance stirred slightly; Octave rose to his feet, almost with a convulsive effort: soon Armance was able to walk, and he escorted her to the house without venturing to look at her. He reproached himself bitterly for the shameful weakness into which he had let himself be drawn; had Armance noticed it, all the deliberate crueltv of his words became useless. She hastily took leave of him on entering the house.

As soon as Madame de Malivert was visible, Octave asked if he might see her and threw himself into her arms. "Dear Mama, give me leave to travel, it is the one course open to me if I am to avoid an abhorrent marriage without failing in the respect I owe to my father." Madame de Malivert, greatly astonished, tried in vain to extract from her son any more positive information as to this alleged marriage.

“What!” she said to him, “neither the young lady’s name, nor who are her family, I am to know nothing? But this is madness.” Soon Madame de Malivert no longer dared to employ that word, which, seemed to her to be too true. All that she could extract from her son, who seemed determined to start that day, was that he would not go to America. The goal of his journey was a matter of indifference to Octave, he had thought only of the pain of departure.

As he was talking to his mother, and trying, in order not to alarm her, to moderate his feelings, a plausible reason for his action suddenly occurred to him: “Dear Mama, a man who bears the name of Malivert and who has the misfortune to have done nothing in the first twenty years of his life, ought to begin by going on the Crusade like our ancestors. I beg you to allow me to go to Greece. If you wish, I shall tell my father that I am going to Naples; from there, quite by chance, curiosity will lead me on to Greece, and what more natural than that a gentleman should visit that country sword in hand? By announcing my itinerary in this way I shall strip it of any air of pretension. . . .”

This plan caused Madame de Malivert the greatest uneasiness; but there was a certain nobility in it and it was in accordance with her idea of duty. After a conversation lasting for two hours, which was a momentary respite for Octave, he obtained his mother’s consent. Clasped in the arms of that tenderest of friends, he enjoyed for a brief moment the bliss of being able to weep freely. He agreed to conditions which he would have refused when he entered the room. He promised her that, if she wished it, twelve months from the day of his landing in Greece, he would come and spend a fortnight with her.

“But, dear Mama, to spare me the annoyance of seeing my return announced in the newspaper, consent to receive my visit at your place, Malivert, in Dauphiné.” Everything was arranged as he wished, and loving tears sealed the terms of this sudden departure.

On leaving his mother’s presence, after performing his duty with regard to Armance, Octave found himself sufficiently calm to pay a visit to the Marquis. “Father,” he said when he had embraced him, “allow your son to

ask you a question: what was the first action of Enguerrand de Malivert, who flourished in 1147, under Louis the Young?"

The Marquis threw open his desk and drew from it a handsome roll of parchment which always lay ready to his hand: it was the pedigree of his family. He saw with intense pleasure that his son's memory had not failed him. "My dear boy," said the old man as he took off his spectacles, "Enguerrand de Malivert started in 1147 on the Crusade with his King." "He was then nineteen, was he not?" Octave went on. "Nineteen exactly," said the Marquis, with growing pleasure in the respect which the young Vicomte shewed for the family tree.

When Octave had given his father's pleasure time to develop and to establish itself firmly in his heart, "Father," he said to him in a firm tone, "noblesse oblige. I am now twenty, I have spent time enough with my books. I have come to ask your blessing, and your leave to travel in Italy and Sicily. I shall not conceal from you, but it is to you alone that I am making this admission, that from Sicily I shall be tempted to proceed to Greece; I shall try to take part in a battle and shall return to you, a little more worthy perhaps of the fine name that you have handed down to me."

The Marquis, gallant as he was, had not at all the spirit of his ancestors in the days of Louis the Young; he was a father and a loving father of the nineteenth century. He was left speechless by Octave's sudden resolve; he would gladly have had a son who was less heroic. Nevertheless, this son's austere air, and the firm resolve indicated by his manner made an impression upon him. Strength of character had never been one of his qualities and he dared not refuse a consent that was asked of him with an air of indifference to his possible refusal.

"You pierce me to the heart," said the worthy old man as he returned to his desk; and without waiting for his son to ask for it, with a trembling hand he wrote out a draft for a considerable sum upon a notary who held funds in his name. "Take this," he said to Octave, "and pray God it be not the last money that I shall give you!"

The bell rang for luncheon. Fortunately Mesdames d'Aumale and de Bonnivet had gone to Paris; and the members of this sad family were not

obliged to conceal their grief with meaningless words.

Octave, somewhat fortified by the consciousness that he had done his duty, found courage to continue. He had thought of starting before luncheon; he felt that it was better to behave as though nothing had happened. The servants might talk. He took his seat at the small luncheon-table, facing Armance.

“It is the last time in my life that I shall see her,” he told himself. Armance managed fortunately to burn herself quite seriously while making tea. This accident would have furnished an excuse for her distress, if any one in that small room had been in a fit state to observe it. M. de Malivert’s voice was tremulous; for the first time in his life, he could think of nothing pleasant to say. He was wondering whether some pretext compatible with the solemn words “Noblesse oblige!” which his son had so aptly quoted, might not furnish him with the means of delaying his son’s departure.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

He unworthy you say?

'Tis impossible.

It would Be more easy to die.

DECKAR.

This motto and that prefixed to Chapter XXII are quoted by Beyle in English, which makes it seem probable that by Deckar he meant the voluminous writer Thomas Dekker, the "Mr. Dickers" of Henslowe's Diary, the author of Satiromastix and The Honest Whore and the Gull's Horn-book and the Witch of Edmonton; but this quotation, which the French editors religiously print in three lines, imagining it to be a specimen of English poetry, bears the marks of Beyle's composition. — C. K. S. M.]

Octave thought he observed that Mademoiselle de Zohiloff looked at him now and again quite calmly. In spite of his peculiar sense of honour, which formally forbade him to dwell upon relations that no longer existed, he could not help thinking that this was the first time that he had seen her since his admission to himself that he loved her; that morning, in the garden, he had been disturbed by the need for action. "So this," he told himself, "is the impression a man feels at the sight of a woman whom he loves. But it is possible that Armance feels no more than friendship for me. Last night it was only a piece of presumption on my part that made me think otherwise."

Throughout this distressing meal, not a word was uttered on the subject that was filling every heart. While Octave was with his father, Madame de Malivert had sent for Armance to inform her of this strange plan of foreign travel. The poor girl felt a need of sincerity; she could not help saying to

Madame de Malivert: “Ah, well, Mama, you see now what foundation there was for your ideas!”

These two charming women were plunged in the bitterest grief. “What is the reason for this sudden departure?” Madame de Malivert repeated, “for it cannot be an insane freak; you have cured him of that.” It was agreed that they should not say a word to any one of Octave’s travels, not even to Madame de Bonnivet. It would never do to bind him to his plan, “and perhaps,” said Madame de Malivert, “we may still be allowed to hope. He will abandon an intention so suddenly conceived. It is the reaction from some distressing occurrence.”

This conversation made Armance’s grief more acute, were that possible, than before; ever loyal to the eternal secrecy which she felt to be due to the sentiment that existed between her cousin and herself, she paid the penalty of her discretion. The words uttered by Madame de Malivert, so prudent a friend and one who loved her so tenderly, since they related to facts of which she was but imperfectly aware, offered no consolation to Armance.

And yet, how sorely she needed the counsels of a woman friend as to the several reasons, any one of which, it seemed to her, might equally well have led to this strange conduct on her cousin’s part! But nothing in the world, not even the intense grief that was lacerating her heart, could make her forget the respect that a woman owes to herself. She would have died of shame rather than repeat the words which the man of her choice had addressed to her that morning. “If I made such a disclosure,” she told herself, “and Octave were to hear of it, he would cease to respect me.”

After luncheon, Octave made hasty preparations to start for Paris. He acted precipitately; he had ceased to account to himself for his movements. He was beginning to feel all the bitterness of his plan of departure and was in dread of the danger of finding himself alone with Armance. If her angelic goodness was not irritated by the frightful harshness of his conduct, if she deigned to speak to him, could he promise himself that he would not be swayed by emotion in bidding farewell to so beautiful, so perfect a cousin?

She would see that he loved her; he must nevertheless leave immediately after, and with the undying remorse of not having done his duty even in that

supreme moment. Were not his most sacred duties towards the creature who was dearer to him than any one in the world, and whose tranquillity he had perhaps endangered?

Octave drove out of the courtyard with the feelings of a man going to his death; and in truth he would have been glad to feel no more than the grief of a man who is being led to execution. He had dreaded the loneliness of the journey, he was scarcely conscious of it; he was amazed at this momentary respite which he owed to misery.

He had just received a lesson in modesty too severe for him to attribute this tranquillity to that vain philosophy which had been his pride in the past. In this respect misery had made a new man of him. His strength was exhausted by so many violent efforts and feelings; he was no longer capable of feeling. Scarcely had he come down from Andilly upon the plain before he fell into a lethargic slumber, and he was astonished, on reaching Paris, to find himself being driven by the servant who, when they started, had been at the back of his cabriolet.

Armance, hidden in the attic of the house, behind the shutters, had watched every incident of his departure. When Octave's cabriolet had passed out of sight behind the trees, standing motionless at her post, she had said to herself: "All is over, he will not return."

Towards evening, after a long spell of weeping, a question that occurred to her caused her some distraction from her grief. "How in the world could Octave, who is so distinguished for his exquisite manners, and was so attentive, so devoted, perhaps even so tender a friend," she added with a blush, "last night, when we were strolling together, adopt a tone that was so harsh, so insulting, so out of keeping with his character, at an interval of a few hours? Certainly he can have heard nothing about me that could offend him."

Armance sought to recall every detail of her own conduct, with the secret desire to come upon some fault which might justify the odd tone that Octave had adopted towards her. She could find nothing that was reprehensible; she was in despair at not seeing herself in the wrong, when suddenly an old idea came to her mind.

Might not Octave have felt a recurrence of that frenzy which in the past had led him to commit many strange acts of violence? This memory, albeit painful at first, shed a ray of light in her mind. Armance was so wretched that every argument which she was capable of advancing very soon proved to her that this explanation was the most probable. The conviction that Octave had not been unfair, whatever excuse he might have, was to her an extreme consolation.

As for his madness, if he was mad, it only made her love him more passionately. “He will need all my devotion, and never shall that devotion fail him,” she added with tears in her eyes, and her heart throbbed with generous courage. “Perhaps at this moment Octave exaggerates the obligation that compels a young gentleman who has done nothing hitherto to go to the aid of Greece. Was not his father anxious, some years ago, to make him assume the Cross of Malta? Several members of his family have been Knights of Malta. Perhaps, since he inherits their fame, he thinks himself obliged to keep the vows which they took to fight the Turks?”

Armance recalled that Octave had said to her on the day on which the news came of the fall of Missolonghi: “I cannot understand the calm tranquillity of my uncle the Commander, he who has taken vows, and, before the Revolution, enjoyed the stipend of a considerable Commandery. And we hope to be respected by the Industrial Party!”

By dint of pondering this comforting way of accounting for her cousin’s conduct, Armance said to herself: “Perhaps some personal motive came to reinforce this general obligation by which it is quite possible that Octave’s noble soul believes itself to be bound?

“The idea of becoming a priest which he once held, before the success of one section of the clergy, has perhaps been responsible for some recent criticism of him. Perhaps he thinks it more worthy of his name to go to Greece and to shew there that he is no degenerate scion of his ancestors than to seek in Paris some obscure quarrel the grounds of which would always be difficult to explain and might leave a stain?

“He has not told me, because things of that sort are not mentioned to a woman. He is afraid that his habit of confiding in me may lead him to

confess it; that accounts for the harshness of his words. He did not wish to be led on to confide in me something that was not proper. . . .”

Thus it was that Armance’s imagination strayed among suppositions that were consoling, since they portrayed an Octave innocent and generous. “It is only from excess of virtue,” she told herself, with tears in her eyes, “that so generous a being can have the appearance of being in the wrong.”

CHAPTER TWENTY

"A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!"

"Nay, you must forget that."

" . . . O, the world hath not a sweeter creature."

OTHELLO, Act IV.

While Armance was walking by herself in a part of the woods of Andilly that was screened from every eye, Octave was in Paris occupied with preparations for his departure. He was alternating between a sort of tranquillity, which he was surprised to feel, and moments of the most poignant despair. Shall we attempt to record the different kinds of grief that marked every moment of his life? Will not the reader weary of these melancholy details?

He seemed to hear a continual sound of voices speaking close to his ear, and this strange and unexpected sensation made it impossible for him to forget his misery for an instant.

The most insignificant objects reminded him of Armance. So great was his distraction that he could not see at the head of an advertisement or on a shop sign an A or a Z without being violently compelled to think of that Armance de Zohiloff whom he had vowed to himself that he would forget. This thought fastened upon him like a destroying fire and with all that attraction of novelty, all the interest he would have felt in it, if for ages past the idea of his cousin had never occurred to his mind.

Everything conspired against him; he was helping his servant, the worthy Voreppe, to pack his pistols; the garrulous talk of the man, enchanted to be going off alone with his master and to be in charge of all the arrangements, was some distraction. Suddenly he caught sight of the words engraved in

abbreviated characters on the mounting of one of the pistols: “Armance tried to fire this weapon, September 3rd, 182 — .”

He took up a map of Greece; as he unfolded it, there fell out one of the pins decorated with a tiny red flag with which Armance had marked the Turkish positions at the time of the siege of Missolonghi.

The map of Greece slipped from his hands. He stood paralysed by despair. “It is forbidden me, then, to forget!” he cried, raising his eyes to heaven. In vain did he endeavour to stiffen his resistance. Everything round about him was stamped with some memory of Armance. The abbreviated form of that beloved name, followed by some significant date, was everywhere inscribed.

Octave wandered aimlessly about his room; he kept giving orders which he instantly countermanded. “Ah! I do not know what I want,” he told himself in a Paroxysm of grief. “O heavens! What suffering can be greater than this?”

He found no relief in any position. He kept making he strangest movements. If he derived from them a certain surprise and some physical pain, for half an hour, the image of Armance ceased to tonnent him. He tried to inflict on himself a physical pain of some violence whenever his thoughts turned to Armance. Of all the remedies that he could imagine, this was the least ineffectual.

“Ah!” he said to himself at other moments, “I must never see her any more! That is a grief which outweighs all the rest. It is a whetted blade the point of which I must employ to pierce my heart.”

He sent his servant to purchase something that would be required on the journey; he needed to be rid of the man’s presence; he wished for a few moments to abandon himself to his frightful grief. Constraint seemed to envenom it more than ever.

The servant had not been out of the room for five minutes before it seemed to Octave that he would have found some relief in being able to speak to him; to have to suffer in solitude had become the keenest of torments. “And

suicide is impossible!" he cried. He went and stood by the window in the hope of seeing something that would occupy his mind for a moment.

Evening came, intoxication proved powerless to help him. He had hoped to derive a little help from sleep, it only maddened him.

Alarmed by the ideas that came to him, ideas which might make him the talk of the household and indirectly compromise Armance: "it would be better," he told himself, "to give myself leave to make an end of things," and he turned the key in his door.

Night had fallen; standing motionless on the balcony of his window, he gazed at the sky. The slightest sound attracted his attention; but gradually, every sound ceased. This perfect silence, by leaving him entirely to himself, seemed to him to add yet more to the horror of his position. Did his extreme exhaustion procure him an instant of partial repose, the confused hum of human speech which he seemed to hear sounding in his ear made him awake with a start.

Next morning, when his door opened, the mental torment which urged him to take action was so atrocious that he felt a desire to throw his arms round the neck of the barber who was cutting his hair, and to tell the man how greatly he was to be pitied. It is by a wild shriek that the wretch who is being tortured by the surgeon's bistouri thinks to relieve his pain.

In his least unendurable moments, Octave felt the need to make conversation with his servant. The most childish trivialities seemed to absorb his whole attention, which he applied to them with a marked assiduity.

His misery had endowed him with an exaggerated modesty. Did his memory recall to him any of those little differences of opinion which arise in society, he was invariably astonished at the positively discourteous emphasis which he had displayed; it seemed to him that his adversary had been entirely in the right and himself in the wrong.

The picture of each of the misfortunes which he had encountered in his life presented itself to him with a Painful intensity; and because he was not to see Armance again, the memory of that swarm of minor evils which a glance

from her eyes would have made him forget, revived now with greater bitterness than ever before. He who had so detested boring visitors began now to long for them. A fool who came to see him was his benefactor for the space of an hour. He had to write a polite letter to a distant relative; this ladv was tempted to regard it as a declaration of love, with such sincerity and profundity did he speak of himself, so plain was it from his words that the writer stood in need of pity.

Between these painful alternatives, Octave had reached the evening of the second day after his parting with Armance; he was coming away from his saddler's. All his preparations would at last be completed during the night, and by the following morning he would be free to start.

Ought he to return to Andilly? This was the question that he was inwardly debating. He perceived with horror that he no longer loved his mother, for she had no place in the reasons that he advanced for visiting Andilly again. He dreaded the sight of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, all the more because at certain moments he said to himself: "But is not the whole of my conduct an act of deception?"

He dared not answer: "Yes," whereupon the voice of the tempter said: "Is it not a sacred duty to visit my poor mother whom I promised that I would see again?" "No, wretch," cried conscience; "that answer is a mere subterfuge; you no longer love your mother." At this agonizing moment his eyes came to rest mechanically upon a playbill, he saw there the word Otello printed in bold characters. This word recalled to him the existence of Madame d'Aumale. "Perhaps she has come to Paris for Otello; in that event, it is my duty to speak to her once again. I must make her regard my sudden departure as the idea of a man who is suffering from boredom. I have long kept this plan from my friends; but for many months my departure has been delayed only by pecuniary difficulties of a sort of which a man cannot speak to his wealthy friends."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.

VlRGIL.

[This line, taken from the Aeneid (I, 207), is inadvertently ascribed by Beyle to Horace. — C. K. S. M.]

Octave entered the Théâtre-Italien; there he-did indeed find Madame d'Aumale and in her box a certain Marquis de Crêveroche; he was one of the fops who especially besieged that charming woman; but being less intelligent or more self-satisfied than the rest, he fancied himself to enjoy some distinction. As soon as Octave appeared, Madame d'Aumale had no eyes for any one else, and the Marquis de Crêveroche, mad with jealousy, left the box without their so much as noticing his departure.

Octave took his place in the front of the box, and, from force of habit, for, this evening, he was far from seeking any sort of affectation, began to talk to Madame d'Aumale in a voice which sometimes drowned those of the singers. We must confess that he slightly exceeded the amount of impertinence which is tolerated, and, if the audience in the stalls of the Théâtre-Italien had been such as is to be found in the other playhouses, he would have had the distraction of a public scene.

In the middle of the second act of Otetto, the boy messenger who sells the libretti of the opera, and proclaims them in nasal accents, came to him with a note couched as follows:

"I am, Sir, naturally contemptuous of all affectations; one comes upon so many in society, that I take notice of them only when they annoy me. You are annoying me by the racket you are making with the little d'Aumale. Hold your tongue.

“I have the honour to be, etc.,

“Le marquis de Crêveroche.

“Rue de Verneuil, no. 54.”

Octave was profoundly astonished by this note which recalled him to the sordid concerns of life; he was at first like a man who has been drawn up for a moment from hell. His first thought was to feign the joy which soon flooded his heart. He decided that M. de Crêveroche’s opera-glass must be directed at Madame d’Aumale’s box, and that this would give his rival an advantage, if she appeared to be less amused after the delivery of his note.

This word rival which he employed in his unspoken thoughts made him laugh aloud; there was a strange look in his eyes. “Why, what is the matter?” asked Madame d’Aumale. “I am thinking of my rivals. Can there be anywhere in the world a man who tries to do more to win your favour than I?” This touching reflexion was more precious to the young Comtesse than the most impassioned notes of the sublime Pasta.

Late that night, after escorting home Madame d’Aumale, who wished to sup, Octave, once more master of himself, was calm and cheerful. What a difference from the state in which he had been since the night he spent in the forest!

It was by no means easy for him to find a second. His manner created such a barrier and he had so few friends that he was greatly afraid of being indiscreet should he ask one of his boon companions to accompany him to M. de Crêveroche’s. At last he remembered a M. Dolier, an officer on half-pay, whom he saw but seldom, but who was his cousin.

At three o’clock in the morning he sent a note to M. Dolier’s porter; at half-past five he called in person, and shortly afterwards the two presented themselves at the house of M. de Creveroche, who received them with a politeness that was somewhat mannered but adhered strictly to the forms. “I have been expecting you, gentlemen,” he said to them in a careless tone; “I was in hopes that you would be so kind as to do me the honour of taking tea

with my friend, M. de Meylan, whom I have the honour to present to you, and myself."

They drank tea. As they rose from table, M. de Crêveroche mentioned the forest of Meudon.

"This gentleman's affected politeness is beginning to make me lose my temper, too," said the officer of the old army as he stepped into Octave's cabriolet. "Let me drive, you must not tire your wrist. How long is it since you were last in a fencing school?" "Three or four years," said Octave, "as far as I can remember." "When did you last fire a pistol?" "Six months ago, perhaps, but I never dreamed of fighting with pistols." "The devil!" said M. Dolier, "six months! This is beginning to be serious. Hold out your arm. You are trembling like a leaf." "That is a weakness I have always had," said Octave.

M. Dolier, greatly annoyed, said not another word. The silent hour that they spent in driving from Paris to Meudon was to Octave the pleasantest moment he had known since his disaster. He had in no way provoked this duel. He meant to defend himself keenly; still, should he be killed, he would be in no way to blame. Situated as he then was, death was for him the greatest good fortune possible.

They arrived at a secluded spot in the forest of Meudon; but M. de Crêveroche, more affected and more of a dandy than ever, offered absurd objections to two or three places. M. Dolier could barely contain himself; Octave had the greatest difficulty in controlling him. "Let me at least talk to the second," said M. Dolier; "I intend to let him know what I think of the pair of them." "Let them wait till tomorrow," Octave checked him in a severe tone; "bear in mind that today you have had the privilege of promising to do me a service."

M. de Crêveroche's second chose pistols without making any mention of swords. Octave thought this in bad taste and made a sign to M. Dolier who at once agreed. Finally; it was time to fire. M. de Crêveroche, a skilled marksman, scored the first hit; Octave was wounded in the thigh; his blood flowed in streams. "I have the right to fire," he said coolly; and M. de Crêveroche received a graze on the leg. "Bandage my thigh with my

handkerchief and your own," Octave said to his servant; "the blood must not flow for some minutes." "Why, what is your idea?" said M. Dolier. "To continue," Octave replied. "I do not feel at all weak, I am just as strong as when we came here; I should carry through any other business, why not make an end of this?" "But it seems to me to be more than finished," said M. Dolier. "And your anger of ten minutes ago, what is become of that?" "The man had no thought of insulting us," replied M. Dolier; "he is merely a fool." The seconds met in conference; both were emphatically opposed to a continuation of the duel. Octave had observed that M. de Crêveroche's second was an inferior creature whom his valour had perhaps thrust into social prominence, but who at heart lived in a state of perpetual adoration of the Marquis; he addressed a few stinging words to the latter. M. de Meylan was reduced to silence by a firm rebuke from his friend, and Octave's second could not in decency open his lips. As he spoke, Octave was perhaps happier than he had ever been in his life. I cannot say what vague and criminal hope he was founding upon a wound that would keep him prisoner for some days in his mother's house, and at no great distance, therefore, from Armance. Finally, M. de Crêveroche, purple with rage, and Octave the happiest of men, succeeded after a quarter of an hour in making their seconds reload their pistols.

M. de Crêveroche, made furious by the fear of not being able to dance for some weeks, owing to the graze on his leg, suggested in vain their firing at one another point blank; the seconds threatened to leave their principals on the ground with their servants and to take the pistols from them if they moved one pace nearer. Luck was once again with M. de Crêveroche; he took a careful aim and wounded Octave severely in the right arm. "Sir," Octave called to him, "you are bound to await my fire, allow me to have my arm bandaged." This operation having been rapidly performed, and Octave's servant, an old soldier, having soaked the handkerchief in brandy which made it cling tightly to the arm; "I feel quite strong," Octave told M. Dolier. He fired, M. de Crêveroche fell, and a minute or two later, died.

Octave, leaning upon his servant's arm, walked back to his cabriolet, into which he climbed without uttering a single word. M. Dolier could not help expressing his pity for the handsome young fellow who lay dying, and whose limbs they could see growing rigid only a few yards away. "It only means one fop the less," said Octave calmly.

Twenty minutes later, although the cabriolet was going at a walking pace, “My arm is hurting me badly,” Octave said to M. Dolier, “the handkerchief is too tight,” and all of a sudden he fainted. He recovered consciousness only an hour later, in the cottage of a gardener, a kind-hearted fellow whom M. Dolier had taken the precaution of paying liberally as soon as he entered the cottage.

“You know, my dear cousin,” Octave said to him, “my mother’s delicate health; leave me, go to the Rue Saint–Dominique; if you do not find my mother in Paris, be so extremely kind as to go out to Andilly; tell her, with every possible precaution, that I have had a fall from my horse and have broken a bone in my right arm. Not a word about duels or bullets. I have reason to hope that certain circumstances, about which I shall tell you later, may prevent my mother from being distressed by this slight wound; say nothing about a duel unless to the police, if necessary, and send me a surgeon. If you go on to the mansion house of Andilly, which is five minutes’ walk from the village, ask for Mademoiselle Armance de Zohiloff, she will prepare my mother for the story you have to tell her.”

The sound of Armance’s name revolutionised Octave’s situation. So he dared to utter that name, a luxury he had so often forbidden himself! He would not be parted from her for another month, perhaps. It was an exquisite moment.

While the duel was in progress, the thought of Armance had many times occurred to Octave, but he banished it sternly. After mentioning her name, he ventured to think of her for a moment; a little later, he felt very weak. “Ah! If I were to die,” he said to himself with joy, and allowed himself to think of Armance as in the days before the fatal discovery of his love for her. Octave observed that the peasants who stood round him appeared greatly alarmed; their evident anxiety diminished his remorse for the liberty he was allowing himself in thinking of his cousin. “If my wounds prove serious,” he said to himself, “I shall be allowed to write to her; I have treated her most cruelly.”

No sooner had the idea of writing to Armance occurred to him than it took entire possession of Octave’s mind. “If I feel better,” he said to himself at length, to hush the reproachful voice of conscience, “I shall still be at liberty to burn my letter.” Octave was in great pain; his head had begun to ache violently. “I may die at any moment,” he told himself cheerfully, making an

effort to recall a few scraps of anatomical science. “Ah, surely I am entitled to write!”

In the end he was weak enough to call for pen, paper and ink. There was no difficulty in providing him with a sheet of coarse essay paper and a bad pen; but there was no ink in the house. Dare we confess it? Octave was so childish as to write with his own blood, which continued to ooze from the bandage on his right arm. He wrote with his left hand, and found this less difficult than he had supposed:

“My DEAR COUSIN:

“I have just received two wounds, each of which may confine me to the house for a fortnight. As you are, next to my mother, the person whom I venerate most m the world, I write these lines to give you the above information. Were I in any danger, I should tell you. You have made me accustomed to the proofs of your tender affection; would you be so kind as to pay a call, as though by chance, upon my mother, whom M. Dolier is going to inform of a mere fall from my horse and a fracture of my right arm. Are you aware, my dear Armance, that we have two bones in the part of the arm next to the hand? It is one of those bones that is broken. Of all the injuries that confine one to the house for a month, it is the simplest that I can think of. I do not know whether it will be proper for you to come and see me during my illness; I am afraid not. I intend to do something rash: because of the narrow stair to my room, they will perhaps suggest placing my bed in the sitting-room through which one has to pass to reach my mother’s bedroom, and I shall agree. I beg you to burn this letter. . . . I have just fainted, it is the natural and in no way dangerous effect of a haemorrhage; you see, I am already using scientific terms. You were my last thought as I lost consciousness, my first upon coming to myself. If you think it quite proper, come to Paris before my mother; in the transport of a wounded man, even when it is merely a flesh-wound, there is always something sinister which she must be spared. One of your misfortunes, dear Armance, is that you have lost your parents; if I by any chance (though it is most improbable) die, you will be parted from one who loved you more dearly than a father loves his daughter. I pray to God that He will grant you the happiness that you deserve. That is saying a great, great deal.

“OCTAVE.”

“P.S. Forgive my harsh words, which were necessary at the time.”

The idea of death having come to Octave, he asked for a second sheet of paper, upon which, in the middle, he wrote:

“I bequeath absolutely everything that I now possess to Mademoiselle Armance de Zohiloff, my cousin, as a trifling token of my gratitude for the care which I am sure that she will take of my mother when I am no longer here.

“Signed at Clamart, the. . . . . .. 182..

“OCTAVE DE MALJVERT.”

And he made two witnesses attest, the nature of his ink leaving him in some doubt as to the validity of the deed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

To the dull plodding man whose vulgar soul is awake only to the

gross and paltry interests of every-day life, the spectacle of a

noble being plunged in misfortune by the resistless force of

passion, serves only as an object of scorn and ridicule.

DECKAR.

[Compare the motto prefixed to Chapter XIX. This, like the other, is presumably of Beyle's composition.]

As the witnesses completed their attestation, he fainted again; the peasants, greatly concerned, had gone in search of their parish priest.

Finally two surgeons arrived from Paris and pronounced Octave's condition to be serious. These gentlemen realised what a nuisance it would be for them to come every day to Clamart, and decided that the patient should be removed to Paris.

Octave had sent his letter to Armance by an obliging young peasant who engaged a horse from the post and promised to be, within two hours, at the mansion of Andilly. This letter outstripped M. Dolier, who had been kept for some time in Paris looking for surgeons. The young peasant succeeded admirably in having himself admitted to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's presence without making any stir in the house. She read the letter. She had barely the strength to ask a few questions. Her courage had completely deserted her.

The receipt of these dreadful tidings induced in her that tendency to discouragement which is the sequel to great sacrifices, made at the call of

duty but with no immediate effect save tranquillity and inertia. She was trying to accustom herself to the thought that she would never see Octave any more, but the idea of his dying had never once occurred to her. This final blow of fortune took her unprepared.

As she listened to the highly alarming details which the young peasant was giving her, she began to sob convulsively, and Mesdames de Bonnivet and de Malivert were in the next room! Armance shuddered at the thought of their hearing her and of having to meet their gaze in the state in which she then was. Such a sight would have been the death of Madame de Malivert, and, in due course, Madame de Bonnivet would have worked it into a tragic and touching anecdote, extremely unpleasant for its heroine.

Mademoiselle de Zohiloff could not, in any case, allow an unhappy mother to see this letter written in the blood of her son. She settled upon the plan of going to Paris, accompanied by her maid. The woman encouraged her to take the young peasant in the carriage with her. I shall pass over the painful details that were repeated to her during the drive. They reached the Rue Saint–Dominique.

She shuddered as the carriage came in sight of the house in a bedroom in which Octave was perhaps drawing his last breath. As it happened, he had not yet arrived; Armance's last doubt vanished, she was sure that he was lying dead in the peasant's cottage at Clamart. Her despair made her incapable of giving the simplest orders; finally she was able to say that a bed must be made ready in the drawing-room. The astonished servants did not understand, but obeyed.

Armance had sent out for a hackney carriage, and her one thought was of how to find an excuse that would allow her to go to Clamart. Everything, it seemed to her, must give way to the obligation to succour Octave in his last moments if he still lived. "What is the world to me, or its vain judgments?" she asked herself. "I considered it only for his sake; besides, if people are reasonable, they must approve of my conduct."

Just as she was about to start, she realised, from a clattering sound at the carriage entrance, that Octave was arriving. The exhaustion caused by the motion of the journey had made him relapse into a state of complete

unconsciousness. Armance, drawing open a window that overlooked the court, saw, between the shoulders of the peasants who were carrying the litter, the pale face of Octave in a dead faint. The spectacle of that lifeless head, keeping time with the motion of the litter and swaying from side to side on its pillow, was too painful for Armance who sank upon the window-sill and lay there motionless.

When the surgeons, after a preliminary dressing of his injuries, came to report to her upon their patient's condition, as to the one member of the family that was in the house, they found her speechless, staring fixedly at them, incapable of replying, and in a state which they judged to be bordering upon insanity.

She listened incredulously to all that they said to her; she believed what her own eyes had seen. This most rational young person had lost all her self-control. Choked by her sobs, she read Octave's letter over and over again. Carried away by her grief, she dared, in the presence of a maid, to raise it to her lips. At last, as she re-read the letter, she saw the injunction to burn it.

Never was any sacrifice more painful; so she must part with all that remained to her of Octave; still, it was his wish. Notwithstanding her sobs, Armance set to work to copy the letter; she broke off at every line, to press it to her lips. Finally she had the courage to burn it on the marble top of her little table; she gathered up the ashes with loving care.

Octave's servant, the faithful Voreppe, was sobbing by his master's bedside; he remembered that he had a second letter written by his master: it was the will. This document reminded Armance that she was not the only sufferer. It was incumbent on her to return to Andilly, to carry news of Octave to his mother. She passed by the bed of the wounded man, whose extreme pallor and immobility seemed to indicate the approach of death; he was still breathing, however. To abandon him in this state to the care of the servants and of a humble surgeon of the neighbourhood, whom she had called in, was the most painful sacrifice of all.

On reaching Andilly, Armance found M. Dolier who had not yet seen Octave's mother; Armance had forgotten that the whole party had gone off together that morning on an excursion to the Château d'Ecouen. They had a

long time to wait before the ladies returned, and M. Dolier was able to relate what had occurred that morning: he did not know the motive of the quarrel with M. de Crèveroche.

Finally they heard the horses enter the courtyard. M. Dolier decided to withdraw and to appear only in in the event of M. de Malivert's desiring his presence. Armance, trying to look as little alarmed as possible, announced to Madame de Malivert that her son had had a fall from his horse while out riding that morning and had broken a bone in his right arm. But her sobs, which after the first sentence she was incapable of controlling, gave the lie to every word of her story.

It would be superfluous to speak of Madame de Mali-vert's despair; the poor Marquis was dumbfounded.

Madame de Bonnivet, deeply moved herself, and absolutely insisting upon going with them to Paris, failed completely to restore his courage. Madame d'Aumale had made off at the first word of Octave's accident and went at a gallop along the road to the Clichy barrier; she reached the Rue Saint–Dominique long before the family, learned the whole truth from Octave's servant and vanished when she heard Madame de Malivert's carriage stop at the door.

The surgeons had said that in the state of extreme weakness in which their patient lay every strong emotion must be carefully avoided. Madame de Mali-vert took her stand behind her son's bed so that she could watch him without his seeing her.

She sent in haste for her friend, the famous surgeon Duquerrel; on the first day, that able man pronounced favourably upon Octave's injuries; the household began to hope. As for Armance, she had been convinced from the first moment, and was never under the slightest illusion. Octave, not being able to speak to her before so many witnesses, tried once to press her hand.

On the fifth day tetanus appeared. In a moment in which an increase of fever gave him strength, Octave begged M. Duquerrel very seriously to tell him the whole truth.

This surgeon, a man of true courage, who had himself been wounded more than once upon the field of battle by a Cossack lance, answered him: “Sir, I shall not conceal from you that there is danger, but I have seen more than one wounded man in your condition survive tetanus.” “In what proportion?” Octave went on.

“Since you are determined to end your life like a man,” said M. Duquerrel, “the odds are two to one that in three days you will have ceased to suffer; if you have to make your peace with heaven, now is your time.” Octave remained pensive after this announcement but presently his reflexions gave place to a feeling of joy and an emphatic smile. The excellent Duquerrel was alarmed by this joy, which he took to be the first signs of delirium.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Tu, sei un nientc, o morte! Ma sarebbe mai dopo sceso il primo

gradino délia mia tomba, che mi verrebbe data di veder la vita come

ella è realmente?

GUASCO.

Until that moment Armance had not seen her cousin save in his mother's presence. That day, after the surgeon had left, Madame de Malivert thought she could detect in Octave's eyes an unusual access of strength coupled with a wish to talk to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff. She asked her young relative to take her place for a moment by her son's bedside, while she herself went to the next room where she was obliged to write a letter.

Octave followed his mother with his eyes; as soon as she was out of sight: "Dear Armance," he said, "I am going to die; there are certain privileges attached to such a moment, and you will not take offence at what I am now going to say to you for the first time in my life; I die as I have lived, loving you with passion; and death is sweet to me, because it enables me to make you this confession."

Armance was too much overcome to reply; tears welled into her eyes, and strange to relate, they were tears of happiness. "The most devoted, the tenderest friendship," she said at length, "binds my destiny to yours." "I hear you," Octave replied, "I am doubly glad to die. You bestow on me your friendship, but your heart belongs to another, to that happy man who has received the promise of your hand."

Octave's accents were too eloquent of misery; Armance had not the heart to distress him at this supreme moment. "No, my dear cousin," she said to him, "I can feel nothing more for you than friendship; but no one upon earth is

dearer to me than you are." "And the marriage of which you spoke to me?" said Octave. "In all my life I have allowed myself to tell but that one lie, and I implore you to forgive me. I saw no other way of opposing a plan suggested to Madame de Malivert by her extreme interest in my welfare. Never will I be her daughter, but never shall I love any one more than I love you; it is for you, cousin, to decide whether you desire my friendship at such a price." "Were I fated to live, it would make me happy." "I have still a condition to make," Armance went on. "So that I may venture without constraint to enjoy the happiness of being perfectly sincere with you, promise me that, if heaven grants us your life, there shall never be any question of marriage between us." "What a strange condition!" said Octave. "Are you prepared to swear to me again that you are not in love with any one?" "I swear to you," Armance replied with tears in her eyes, "that never in my life have I loved any one but Octave, and that he is by far the dearest person in the world to me; but I can feel nothing stronger for him than friendship," she added, blushing a deep red at this speech, "and I shall never be able to place any confidence in him unless he gives me his word of honour that, whatever may happen, he will never as long as he lives make any direct or indirect attempt to obtain my hand." "I swear it," said Octave, profoundly astonished . . . "but will Armance permit me to speak to her of my love?" "It will be the name that you will give to our friendship," said Armance with a bewitching glance. "It is only for the last few days," Octave went on, "that I have known that I love you. This is not to say that, for a very long time back, never have five minutes passed without the memory of Armance arising to determine whether I ought to deem myself fortunate or unfortunate; but I was blind.

"A moment after our conversation in the woods of Andilly, a pleasantry which Madame d'Aumale let fall proved to me that I love you. That night, I tasted the most cruel torments of despair, I felt that I ought to shun you, I made a vow to forget you and to go-away. Next morning, as I returned from the forest, I came upon you in the garden, and spoke to you harshly, in order that your righteous indignation at such atrocious behaviour on my part might arm me with strength to resist the sentiment that was keeping me in France. Had you addressed to me but a single one of those tender words which you have said to me at times in the past, had you looked me in the face, I should never have found the courage that I required to make me go. Do you forgive

me?" "You have made me very unhappy, but I had forgiven you before the confession you have just made me."

An hour followed during which Octave for the first time in his life tasted the happiness of speaking of his love to the beloved.

A single utterance had at once altered the whole situation between Octave and Armance; and as for a long time past every moment of the life of each had been occupied in thinking of the other, an astonishment that was full of charm made them forget the approach of death; they could not utter a word to one another without finding fresh reasons for loving one another.

More than once Madame de Malivert had come, on tiptoe, to the door of her own room. She had remained unobserved by two creatures who had forgotten everything, even the cruel death that was waiting to part them. In the end she became afraid that Octave's agitation might increase the peril; she went up to them and said, almost with a laugh: "Are you aware, children, that you have been chattering for more than an hour and a half, it may send up his temperature." "Dear Mama, I can assure you," replied Octave, "that I have not felt so well for four days." He said to Armance: "There is one thing that worries me when my fever is very high. That poor Marquis de Crèveroche had a very fine dog which seemed to be greatly attached to him. I am afraid the poor beast may be neglected now that his master is no more. Could not Voreppe dress up as a gamekeeper and go and buy that fine sporting dog. I should like at least to be certain that it is being well treated. I hope to see it. In any case, I give it to you, my dear cousin."

After this day of agitation, Octave fell into a deep sleep, but on the morrow the tetanus reappeared. M. Duquerrel felt it his duty to speak to the Marquis, and the whole household was plunged in despair. Notwithstanding the stiffness of his nature, Octave was beloved by the servants; they admired his firmness and sense of justice.

As for him, albeit suffering at times the most agonising torments, happier than he had ever yet been in the whole course of his life, the approaching end of that life made him judge of it at last in a rational manner which intensified his love for Armance. It was to her that he was indebted for the few happy moments which he could perceive amid that ocean of bitter

sensations and misfortunes. Acting upon her advice, instead of shunning the world, he had acted, and was cured of many false judgments which had increased his misery. Octave was in constant pain, but, greatly to the astonishment of the worthy Duquerrel, he still lived, he had even some strength.

It took him a whole week to renounce the vow never to fall in love which had been the principal motive of his whole life. The approach of death obliged him first of all to forgive himself with sincerity for having violated his oath. “People die as and how they must,” he told himself, “but I am dying on the pinnacle of happiness; fortune owed me perhaps this compensation after dooming me continually to such misery.

“But I may live,” he thought, and was then more embarrassed than before. At length he arrived at the conclusion that, in the unlikely event of his surviving his injuries, the sign of weakness of character would be in his keeping the rash vow made in early youth and not in breaking it. “For after all the pledge was given solely in the interests of my own happiness and honour. Why, if I live, may I not continue to enjoy in Armance’s company the delights of that tender affection which she has sworn for me? Is it within my power not to feel the passionate love that I have for her?”

Octave was astonished to find himself alive; when at length, after a week of inward struggle, he had solved all the problems that were troubling his spirit, and had entirely resigned himself to accepting the unexpected pleasure which heaven was sending him, in twenty-four hours there was a complete change in his condition, and the most pessimistical of the doctors ventured to answer to Madame de Malivert for her son’s life. Shortly afterwards, the fever ceased, and he sank into a state of extreme weakness, barely able to speak.

On returning to life, Octave was seized with a lasting astonishment; everything was altered in his eyes. “It seems to me,” he said to Armance, “that before that accident I was mad. Every moment I dreamed of you, and managed to extract unhappiness from that charming thought. Instead of making my behaviour conform to the incidents which I encountered in life, I had made myself an a priori rule anterior to all experience.”

“There is bad philosophy,” said Armance with a laugh, “that is why my aunt was so determined to convert you. You are really mad from excess of pride, you learned gentlemen; I cannot think why we choose you, for you are far from merry. For my own part, I despise myself for not having formed a friendship with some quite inconsequent young man who talks of nothing but his tilbury.”

When he was in full possession of his faculties, Octave continued to reproach himself with having broken his word; he had fallen slightly in his own estimation. But the happiness of being able to say everything to Armance, even the remorse that he felt for loving her with passion, created, for a person who had never in his life confided in any one, a state of bliss so far exceeding anything that he had expected that he never had any serious intention of returning to his old moods and prejudices.

“When I promised myself that I would never fall in love, I was setting myself a task beyond human capacity; that is why I have always been miserable. And that violation of nature lasted for five years! I have found a heart the like of which I never had the slightest idea could exist anywhere on earth. Fortune, outwitting my folly, plants happiness in my way, I take offence at it, I almost fly into a passion! In what respect am I breaking the law of honour? Who is there that knew of my vow to reproach me with breaking it? But it is a contemptible habit, this of forgetting one’s promises; is it nothing to have to blush in one’s own sight? But this is a vicious circle; have I not furnished myself with excellent reasons for breaking that rash vow made by a boy of sixteen? The existence of a heart like Armance’s excuses everything.”

Anyhow, such is the force of habit, Octave found perfect happiness only with his cousin. He needed her presence.

An uncertainty crept in now and again to trouble Armance’s happiness. She felt that Octave had not taken her completely into his confidence as to the motives that had led him to avoid her society and to leave France after the night he had spent in the woods of Andilly. She considered it beneath her dignity to ask questions, but she did say to him one day, indeed with a distinct air of severity: “If you wish me to give way to the inclination which I feel in myself to become your great friend, you must give me assurances

against the fear of being abandoned at any moment, at the prompting of some odd fancy that may have entered your head. Promise me that you will never leave the place in which I am with you, Paris or Andilly or wherever it may be, without telling me all your reasons." Octave promised.

On the sixtieth day after his injury, he was able to rise, and the Marquise, who felt keenly the absence of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, reclaimed her from Madame de Malivert, who was almost pleased to see her go.

People are less self-conscious in the intimacy of family life and during the anxiety of a great sorrow. The dazzling varnish of an extreme politeness is then less in evidence, and the true qualities of the heart regain their proper proportions. The want of fortune of this young relative and her foreign name, which M. de Soubirane was always careful to mispronounce, had led the Commander, and even M. de Malivert himself at times, to address her almost as they would have addressed a paid companion.

Madame de Malivert was trembling lest Octave should perceive this. The respect which sealed his lips with regard to his father, would have made him all the more insolent towards M. de Soubirane, and the Commander's easily irritated vanity would not have failed to take its revenge in some discreditable anecdote which he would put in circulation at Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's expense.

These rumours might come to Octave's ears, and, knowing the violence of his nature, Madame de Malivert anticipated the most painful scenes, the most impossible, perhaps, to conceal. Fortunately nothing of all that her somewhat vivid imagination had pictured did occur. Octave had noticed nothing. Armance had turned the tables on M. de Soubirane with a few veiled epigrams on the ferocity of the war which, in recent years, the Knights of Malta had waged upon the Turks, while the Russian officers, with names unknown in history, were taking Ismailoff.

Madame de Malivert, thinking in anticipation of her daughter-inlaw's interests, and of the immense disadvantage of entering society without either a fortune or a name, imparted to a few intimate friends confidences intended to discredit beforehand anything that wounded vanity might inspire in M. de Soubirane. These extreme precautions had perhaps not been out of place; but

the Commander, who had been gambling on ’Change since his sister’s indemnity, and gambling on certainties, lost quite a considerable sum, which made him forget all the niceties of his hatred.

After Armance’s departure, Octave, who saw her now only in Madame de Bonnivet’s presence, began to nourish dark thoughts; his mind dwelt once again upon his old vow. As the wound in his arm gave him constant pain, and even fever at times, the doctors suggested sending him to take the waters at Bareges; but M. Duquerrel, who was intelligent enough not to prescribe the same treatment for all his patients, declared that any air that was at all keen would suffice for his patient’s convalescence, and ordered him to spend the autumn on the slopes of Andilly.

This was a spot dear to Octave; by the following day he had removed there. Not that he had any hope of finding Armance there; Madame de Bonnivet had long been speaking of an expedition into the heart of Poitou. She was having restored at great expense the ancient castle in which Admiral de Bonnivet had had the honour, in times past, to entertain François I, and Mademoiselle de Zohiloff was to accompany her.

But the Marquise had had secret information of an approaching list of promotion to the Order of the Holy Spirit. The late King had promised the Blue Riband to M. de Bonnivet. Consequently, the Poitevin architect soon wrote to say that Madame’s presence would be superfluous at that moment, since they were short of workmen, and, a few days after Octave’s arrival, Madame de Bonnivet came and settled at Andilly.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

In case the noise made by the servants in moving about their attic quarters should disturb Octave, Madame de Bonnivet transferred them to a peasant's house near at hand. It was in what one might call material considerations of this sort that the Marquise's genius triumphed; she brought an exquisite grace to bear upon what she was doing, and was most skilful in employing her wealth to enhance her reputation for cleverness.

The core of her little world was composed of people who for the last forty years had never done anything that was not strictly conventional, the people who set the fashions and are then surprised at them. These declared that, since Madame de Bonnivet was deliberately sacrificing the prospect of a visit to her estates in the country, and was going instead to spend the autumn at Andilly, in order to keep her dear friend Madame de Malivert company, it was the bounden duty of every one with a heart in his bosom to go out and share her solitude.

So popular was this solitude that the Marquise was obliged to take rooms in the little village down the hill in order to accommodate all the friends who came crowding to see her. She put in wallpapers and beds. Soon half the houses in the village had been decorated under her guidance and were occupied. It became the correct thing to come out from Paris and keep this admirable Marquise, who was looking after that poor Madame de Malivert, company, and Andilly was as thronged with fashion throughout the month of September as any watering-place. This new fashion threatened even to invade the Court. "If we had a score of clever women like Madame de Bonnivet," some one was heard to say, "we might risk going to live at Versailles." And M. de Bonnivet's Blue Riband appeared certain.

Never had Octave been so happy. The Duchesse d'Ancre felt this happiness to be quite natural. "Octave," she said, "may well regard himself as being in a sense the centre of all this movement to Andilly: in the mornings every one sends to inquire after his health; what could be more flattering at his age? That young man is extremely fortunate," the Duchesse went on to say. "He is

getting to know the whole of Paris, and it will make him more impertinent than ever." This, however, was not the true reason for Octave's happiness.

He saw that beloved mother, to whom he had given so much cause for anxiety, perfectly happy. She was overjoyed at the brilliant manner in which her son was making his entry into society. Since his triumph, she had begun not to conceal from herself that this kind of distinction was too original and too little copied from recognised types not to need the support of the all-powerful influence of fashion. Failing that reinforcement, it would have passed unnoticed.

One of the things that gave Madame de Malivert great pleasure about this time was a conversation that she had with the famous Prince de R —— — , who came to spend a night at Andilly.

This most outspoken of courtiers, whose word moreover was law in society, appeared to be taking notice of Octave. "Have you observed, as I have, Madame," he said to Madame de Malivert, "that your son never utters a syllable of that rehearsed wit which is the curse of our age? He scorns to appear in a drawing-room armed with his tablets, and his wit varies with the feelings that may be aroused in him. That is why the fools are sometimes so cross with him and withhold their support. When any one succeeds in interesting the Vicomte de Malivert, his wit appears to spring at once from his heart or from his character, and that character seems to me to be one of the strongest. Don't you agree with me, Madame, that character is an organ which has grown obsolete among the men of today? Your son seems to me to be destined to play an exceptional part. He is bound to enjoy the very highest reputation among his contemporaries: he is the most solid, and the most obviously solid man that I know. I should like to see him enter the peerage early in life, or to see you get him made Maître des Requêtes." "But," put in Madame de Malivert, almost breathless with the pleasure she felt at the praise of so good a judge, "Octave's success is anything but general."

"All the better," M. de R —— —— went on with a smile; "it will take the imbeciles of this country three or four years, perhaps, to understand Octave, and you will be able, before any jealousy appears, to push him almost to his proper place; I ask one thing only: restrain your son from appearing in print, he is too well born for that sort of thing."

The Vicomte de Malivert had still a long way to go before he should be worthy of the brilliant horoscope that had been drawn for him; he had still many prejudices to overcome. His distaste for his fellow men was deeply rooted in his heart; were they prosperous, they filled him with revulsion; wretched, the sight of them was more burdensome still. It was only rarely that he had been able to attempt to cure himself of this distaste by a course of good actions. Had he succeeded in this, his unbounded ambition would have thrust him into their midst and into places where fame is purchased with the most costly sacrifices.

At the time of which we are speaking, Octave was far from any thought of a brilliant destiny for himself. Madame de Malivert had had the good sense not to speak to him of the singular future which M. le Prince de R —— —— predicted for him; it was only with Armance that she ventured to indulge in the blissful discussion of this prophecy.

Armance possessed in a supreme degree the art of banishing from Octave's mind all the annoyances that society caused him. Now that he ventured to confess these to her, she was more and more astonished at the revelation of his singular character. There were still days upon which he would draw the most sinister conclusions from the most casual utterances. There was much talk of him at Andilly. "You are tasting the immediate fruits of celebrity," Armance told him; "people are saying all sorts of foolish things about you. Do you expect a fool, simply because he has the honour to be speaking about you, to find witty things to say?" This was a severe test for a man inclined to take offence.

Armance insisted upon his making her a full and immediate report of all the speeches offensive to himself that he might hear uttered in society. She had no difficulty in proving to him that they had been uttered without any reference to himself, or that they contained only that amount of malice which every one feels towards every one else.

Octave's self-esteem had nothing now to keep secret from Armance, and these two young hearts had arrived at that unbounded confidence which is perhaps the most charming thing about love. They could not discuss anything under the sun without secretly comparing the charm of their present taste of mutual confidence with the constraint by which they had been bound

a few months earlier when they spoke of the same subjects. And this constraint itself, the memory of which was so strong, and in spite of which they were already, at this period, so happy, was a proof of the old and lasting nature of their friendship.

Next day, on reaching Andilly, Octave was not without some hope that Armance would come there also; he announced that he was ill and kept the house. A few davs later, Armance did indeed arrive with Madame de Bonnivet. Octave so arranged that his first outing might take place precisely at seven o'clock in the morning. Armance met him in the garden, where he led her up to an orange tree planted beneath his mother's windows. There, some months earlier, Armance, her heart wrung by the strange words that he was addressing to her, had fallen to the ground in a momentary faint. She recognised the spot, smiled, and leaned against the tub of the orange tree, shutting her eyes. But for the absence of pallor, she was almost as beautiful as upon the day when she had fainted for love of him. Octave felt keenly aware of the change in their relations. He recognised the little diamond cross which Armance had received from Russia and which was a relic of her mother. As a rule it was hidden, it was now brought to light by the movement which Armance made. Octave for a moment lost his senses; he seized her hand, as upon the day when she had fainted, and his lips ventured to brush her cheek. Armance drew herself up quickly and blushed a deep red. She reproached herself bitterly for this flirtation. "Do you wish to make me angry?" she asked him. "Do you wish to force me never to leave the house without a maid?"

A breach that lasted for some days was the immediate result of Octave's indiscretion. But between two people who felt a perfect attachment to one another, occasions for quarrelling were rare: whatever Octave might have occasion to do, before considering whether it would be agreeable to himself, he would seek to discover whether Armance would be able to see in it a fresh proof of his devotion.

In the evening, when they were at opposite ends of the immense drawing-room in which Madame de Bonni-vet assembled all the most remarkable and influential people in the Paris of the day, if Octave had to answer a question, he would make use of some word which Armance had just employed, and she could see that the pleasure of repeating this word made him oblivious of

the interest he might otherwise have felt in what he was saying. Without any deliberate intention, there grew up thus for the two of them, amid the most delightful and animated society, not so much a habit of private conversation as a sort of echo which, without expressing anything distinctly, seemed to speak of a perfect friendship and an unbounded affection.

May we venture to reproach with a trace of stiffness the extreme politeness which the present generation thinks itself to have inherited from that blissful eighteenth century when there was nothing to hate?

In the midst of this advanced civilisation which for every one of our actions, however trivial it may be, insists upon furnishing us with a pattern which we must copy or state our case against it, this sentiment of sincere and unbounded devotion comes very near to creating perfect happiness.

Armance never found herself alone with her cousin save in the garden, beneath the windows of the mansion, the ground floor of which was occupied, or in Madame de Malivert's bedroom and in her presence. But this room was very large, and often the frail state of Madame de Malivert's health obliged her to lie down for a little; she would then ask her children (for thus it was that she always spoke of them) to go over to the bay of the window overlooking the garden, so as not to disturb her rest with the sound of their voices. This tranquil, entirely intimate life in the morning hours gave place in the evening to the life of the highest society.

In addition to the people staying in the village, many carriages would come out from Paris, returning after supper. These cloudless days passed rapidly. It never occurred to either of these two young hearts to admit that they were enjoying one of the rarest forms of happiness that is to be met with here below; on the contrary they supposed that they had still many unsatisfied desires. Having no experience of life, they did not see that these fortunate moments could only be of very brief duration. At most, this happiness, wholly sentimental and deriving nothing from vanity or ambition, might have survived in the bosom of some poor family who never saw any strangers. But they were living in society, they were but twenty years old, they were spending all their time together, and, what was the height of imprudence, they let it be guessed that they were happy, and had an air of

caring singularly little what society might think. It was bound to have its revenge.

Armance gave no thought to this peril. The only thing that troubled her from time to time was the necessity of renewing her private vow never to accept her cousin's hand, whatever might happen. Madame de Malivert, for her part, was quite calm; she had not the least doubt that her son's present way of life was bringing about an event for which she passionately longed.

Notwithstanding the happy days with which Armance was filling the life of Octave, in her absence there were darker moments in which he pondered the destiny in store for him, and he arrived at the following conclusion: "The most favourable impression of myself reigns in Armance's heart. I might confess to her the strangest things about myself, and, so far from despising me, or taking a horror of me, she would pity me."

Octave told his friend that in his boyhood he had had a passion for stealing. Armance was appalled by the terrible details into which his imagination was pleased to enter as to the lamentable consequences of this strange weakness. This admission overturned her whole existence; she sank into a profound abstraction for which she was scolded; but, before a week had passed since this strange confession, she was pitying Octave and more tender to him, were that possible, than ever before. "He needs my consolation," she told herself, "to make him pardon himself."

Octave, assured by this experience of the unbounded devotion of her whom he loved, and no longer having to conceal his dark thoughts, became far more affable in society; before the confession of his love, induced by the approach of death, he had been an extremely witty and remarkable, rather than an affable young man; he appealed especially to serious people. These thought they could detect in him the every-day side of a man destined to do great things. The idea of duty was too much in evidence in his manner, and went the length at times of giving him an English expression. His misanthropy was interpreted as pride and ill-humour by the older element of society, and shunned the effort to conquer it. Had he been a peer at this date, he would have won a reputation.

It is the want of the hard school of misfortune that often mars the perfection of the young men who were created to be the most charming. In a day, Octave had been formed by the lessons of that terrible master. It may be said that, at the period of which we are speaking, nothing was wanting to the personal beauty of the young Vicomte, or to the brilliant existence which he enjoyed in society. His praises were sung there without ceasing by Mesdames d'Aumale and de Bonnivet and by the older men.

Madame d'Aumale was justified in saying that he was the most attractive man she had ever met, "for he never bores one," was her foolish explanation. "Until I knew him, I had never even dreamed of such a recommendation, and the great thing, after all, is to be amused." "And I," thought Armance as she listened to this artless speech, "I refuse this man who is so welcome everywhere else the permission to clasp my hand; it is a duty," she went on, with a sigh, "and never shall I fail to observe it." There were evenings on which Octave indulged in the supreme happiness of not talking, and of watching the spectacle of Armance, as presented before his eyes. These moments did not pass unobserved, either by Madame d'Aumale, vexed that any one should neglect to provide her with amusement, or by Armance, delighted to see the man she adored occupied exclusively with herself.

The list of promotions in the Order of the Holy Spirit appeared to have been delayed; it was a question of Madame de Bonnivet's departure for the old castle situated in the heart of Poitou, which had given its name to the family. A new personage was to join the expedition, namely, M. le Chevalier de Bonnivet, the youngest of the sons that the Marquis had had by a former marriage.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Totus mundus stult.

HUNGARIAE R —— —

About the time of Octave's wound, a fresh person had arrived from Saint–Acheul to join the Marquise's party. This was the Chevalier de Bonnivet, her husband's third son.

Had the old order been still in existence, he would have been destined for Episcopal rank, and, albeit many things have now changed, a sort of family tradition had persuaded everybody, himself included, that he ought to belong to the Church.

This young man, who was barely twenty, was supposed to be very clever; his chief characteristic was a wisdom beyond his years. He was a little creature, very pale; he had a plump face, and, taking him all round, a somewhat priestly air.

One evening the Etoile was brought in. The single paper band that is used to wrap this newspaper happened to be displaced; it was evident that the porter had read it. "And this paper, too!" was the Chevalier de Bonnivet's impulsive exclamation, "simply to save the cost of a second band of grey paper, folded across the other, it is not afraid of running the risk of letting the lower orders read it, as though the lower orders were intended to read! As though the lower orders were capable of distinguishing good from evil! What are we to expect of the Jacobin papers when we see the Monarchist sheets behave like this?"

This burst of spontaneous eloquence greatly enhanced the Chevalier's reputation. It at once brought over to his side the elderly people and every one who in Andilly society had more pretensions than wit. The taciturn

Baron de Bisset, whom the reader may perhaps remember, rose gravely and crossed the room to embrace the Chevalier without uttering a word. This action cast an air of solemnity over the room for some minutes and amused Madame d'Aumale. She called the Chevalier to her side, tried to make him talk, and took him to some extent under her wing.

All the young women followed in her wake. They made the Chevalier a sort of rival to Octave, who had already been wounded and was confined to the house, in Paris.

But presently they began to find that the Chevalier de Bonnivet, young as he was, gave them a sense of revulsion. He was felt to be singularly wanting in sympathy with all the things in which people are interested. The young man had a future of his own. There might be detected in him an element of deeply rooted treachery towards every one in the world.

On the day following that on which he had shone at the expense of the Etoile, the Chevalier de Bonnivet, who saw Madame d'Aumale from an early hour, opened the ball with her on the lines of Tartufe when he offers a handkerchief to Dorine so that she may cover "things which ought not to be seen." He read her a serious lecture upon some frivolous remark which she had just made about a procession.

The young Comtesse retorted sharply, brought him repeatedly back to the charge, and was in ecstasies at his absurdity. "He is just like my husband," she thought. "What a pity poor Octave is not here, how we should laugh!"

The Chevalier de Bonnivet was shocked more than by anvthing else by the sort of renown that clung to the Vicomte de Malivert, whose name he heard upon every tongue. Octave came to Andilly and reappeared in society. The Chevalier supposed him to be in love with Madame d'Aumalc, and, with this idea in his head, formed the plan of developing a passion for the pretty Comtesse, with whom he was most affable.

The Chevalier's conversation was a perpetual and very clever string of allusions to the masterpieces of the great writers and poets of French and Latin literature. Madame d'Aumalc, whose knowledge was scanty, made him explain the allusions to her, and nothing amused her more. The

Chevalier's really astounding memory did him good service; he repeated without hesitation the lines of Racine or the passages from Bossuet to which he had referred, and indicated clearly and elegantly the bearing of the allusion he had intended to make upon the subject of their conversation. All this had the charm of novelty in the eyes of Madame d'Aumale.

One day the Chevalier said: "A single short article in La Pandore is enough to spoil all the pleasure that we derive from power." This was considered very deep.

Madame d'Aumale greatly admired the Chevalier; but after a very few weeks had passed he had begun to alarm her. "You have the effect upon me," she told him, "of a venomous animal encountered in some solitary spot in the heart of the forest. The cleverer you are, the more capable you become of doing me harm."

Another day she said to him that she would wager that he had of his own initiative discovered the great principle: that speech was given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts.

The Chevalier had been highly successful with the rest of society. For instance, although separated from his father for the last eight years, which he had spent at Saint–Acheul, Brig, and elsewhere, often without the Marquis's even knowing where he was, once he had returned and was living with him, in less than two months he succeeded in acquiring a complete domination over the mind of the old man, one of the shrewdest courtiers of the time.

M. de Bonnivet had always been afraid of seeing the French Restoration end like the English; but for the last year or so this fear had made a regular miser of him. Society was therefore greatly astonished to see him give thirty thousand francs to his son the Chevalier, as a contribution to the foundation of certain houses of Jesuits.

Every evening, at Andilly, the Chevalier used to recite prayers, together with the forty or fifty servants in attendance upon the people who were staying in the mansion or in the peasants' houses that had been secured for the Marquise's friends. These prayers were followed by a short exhortation, improvised and very well expressed.

The elderly women began to make their way to the orangery, where these evening exercises were held. The Chevalier had it decorated with charming flowers, constantly renewed, for which he sent to Paris. Soon this pious and severe exhortation began to arouse a general interest; it was in marked contrast to the frivolous manner in which the rest of the evening was spent.

Commander de Soubirane declared himself one of the warmest supporters of this method of leading back to good principles all the subordinates who of necessity surround important persons and who, he would add, shewed such cruelty the moment the reign of terror began. This was a favourite expression with the Commander, who went about everywhere announcing that within ten years, unless we re-established the Knights of Malta and the Jesuits, we should have a second Robespierre.

Madame de Bonnivet had not failed to send to her son-inlaw's pious exercises those of her own people whom she could trust. She was greatly astonished to learn that he made doles of money to the servants who came to confide to him in private that they were in want.

The list of promotions in the Order of the Holy Spirit being apparently delayed, Madame de Bonnivet announced that her architect had written to her from Poitou that he had managed to collect a sufficient number of workmen. She made her preparations for the journey, as did Armance. She was none too well pleased when the Chevalier de Bonnivet announced his intention of accompanying her to Bonnivet, in order, he said, to see once more the old castle, the cradle of his race.

The Chevalier saw quite well that his presence annoyed his mother-inlaw; all the more reason for him to accompany her on this expedition. He hoped to impress Armance by recalling the glories of his ancestors; for he had noticed that Armance was friends with the Vicomte de Malivert, and intended to take her from him. These projects, long under consideration, became apparent only at the moment of their execution.

No less successful with the young people than with the more serious element of society, before leaving An-dilly, the Chevalier de Bonnivet had managed artfully to fill Octave with jealousy. After the departure of Armance, Octave even began to think that this Chevalier de Bonnivet, who boasted an esteem

and a respect for her that were unbounded, might well be that mysterious suitor whom an old friend of her mother had found for her.

On taking leave of one another, Armance and her cousin were alike tormented by dark suspicions. Armance felt that she was leaving Octave with Madame d'Aumale; but she did not think that she could allow herself to write to him.

During this cruel separation, Octave could do nothing but address to Madame Bonnivet two or three letters, quite charming but couched in a singular tone. Had any one who was a stranger to their society seen these letters, he would have thought that Octave was madly in love with Madame de Bonnivet and dared not confess his love to her.

In the course of this month of absence, Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, whose good sense was no longer troubled by the bliss of being under the same roof as her friend and of seeing him thrice daily, made some severe reflexions. Albeit her behaviour had been perfectly proper, she could not blind herself to the fact that it must be easy to read the exnression in her eyes when she looked at her cousin.

The promiscuity of travel was the cause of her overhearing a conversation among Madame de Bonnivet's maids which drew many tears from her eyes. These women, like every one who is connected with persons of importance, seeing nothing anywhere but pecuniary interests, set down to this motive the appearance of passion which Armance was assuming, they said, in order to become Vicomtesse de Malivert; no small matter to a penniless girl of such obscure birth.

The idea of her being slandered to such a degree had never occurred to Armance. "I am a ruined girl," she said to herself; "my feeling for Octave has passed beyond suspicion, and even that is not the worst of my supposed offences. I live under the same roof as he, and it is not possible for him to marry me. . . . " From that instant, the thought of the slanders that were being uttered against her, resisting every argument that Armance could advance, poisoned her life.

There were moments in which she fancied that she had forgotten even her love for Octave. “Marriage is not intended for a girl in my position. I shall not marry him;” she thought; “and I shall have to live far more apart from him. If he forgets me, as is highly probable, I shall go and end my days in a convent; that will be a very proper asylum, and greatly to be desired, for the rest of my existence. I shall think of him, I shall hear of his triumphs. People in society will be able to recall many examples of lives similar to that which I shall be leading.”

These precautions were sound; but the thought, terrible for a girl, that she might, with some appearance of justice, be exposed to the slander of a whole household, and that the household in which Octave was living, cast a shadow over Armance’s life which nothing could dissipate. Did she endeavour to escape from the memory of her misdeeds, for this was the name she gave to the sort of life she had led at Andilly, she would begin to think of Madame d’Aumale, whose attractions she would unconsciously exaggerate. Chevalier de Bonnivet’s company made her regard as even more irremediable than they actually are all the harm that society can do us when we have offended it. Towards the end of her stay at the old Château de Bonnivet, Armance spent every night in weeping. Her aunt noticed this melancholy, and did not conceal from the girl how angry it made her.

It was during her stay in Poitou that Armance learned of an event which affected her but little. She had three uncles in the Russian service; these young men perished by suicide during the troubles in that country. Their death was kept secret; but finally, after many months, some letters which the police had not succeeded in intercepting were delivered to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff. She had succeeded to a comfortable fortune, which would make her a suitable match for Octave.

This event was not calculated to appease the anger of Madame de Bonnivet, to whom Armance was necessary. The poor girl had to listen to some very sharp comments on the preference that she shewed for Madame de Malivert’s drawing-room. Great ladies are no more spiteful than the average rich woman; but one acquires in their societv a greater susceptibiltv, and feels more profoundly and, if I may venture to use the expression, more irremediably, their unpleasant remarks.

Armance supposed that nothing was wanting to complete her misery, when the Chevalier de Bonnivet informed her, one morning, with the indifferent air which people assume in repeating a piece of news which is already stale, that Octave was again far from well, and that the wound in his arm had opened and was causing anxiety. Since Armance had left him, Octave, who had become hard to please, was often bored with his mother's drawing-room. He was guilty of acts of imprudence when shooting, which had serious consequences. He had had the idea of using a little gun, very light, which he fired with his left hand; his success with this weapon encouraged him.

One day, as he was going after a winged partridge, he jumped a ditch and hit his arm against a tree, which brought back his fever. During this fever and the state of weakness that followed it, the artificial happiness, so to speak, which he had enjoyed in the company of Armance, seemed to have become as unsubstantial as a dream.

Mademoiselle de Zohiloff returned at length to Paris, and the following day, at Andilly, the lovers met once more; but they were very sad, and this sorrow was of the worst possible kind: it sprang from a mutual doubt. Armance did not know what tone to adopt with her cousin; and they barely spoke to one another the first day.

While Madame de Bonnivet was indulging in the pleasure of building gothic towers in Poitou and imagining that she was reconstructing the twelfth century, Madame d'Aumale had taken decisive action to ensure the great triumph which came at last to crown the long-nourished ambition of M. de Bonnivet. She was the heroine of Andilly. In order not to have to part with so valuable a friend, during her own absence, Madame del Bonnivet had made the Comtesse d'Aumale agree to occupy a little apartment in the highest part of the mansion, close to Octave's room. And Madame d'Aumale seemed to every one to be perfectly well aware that it was in a sense for her sake that Octave had received the wound which was causing his fever. It was in extremely bad taste to remind people of the affair, which had cost the Marquis de Crêveroche his life; Madame d'Aumale could not, however, refrain from making frequent allusions to it: the fact is that the way of the world is to natural delicacy pretty much what science is to the mind. Her character, entirely on the surface and not at all romantic, was impressed first

and foremost by realities. Armance had not been more than a few hours at Andilly before this constant recurrence to the same topics, by a mind that as a rule was so frivolous, struck her forcibly.

Armance arrived there very sad and greatly discouraged; she felt for the second time in her life the assault of a sentiment that is terrifying, especially when it coincides in a single heart with an exquisite sense of the proprieties. Armance imagined that she had serious fault to find with herself in this respect. “I must keep a strict watch over myself,” she said to herself as she turned away her gaze, which was resting on Octave, to examine the brilliant Comtesse d’Aumale. And each separate charm of the Comtesse was for Armance the occasion of an excessive act of humility. “How could Octave fail to give her the preference?” she said to herself; “I myself feel that she is adorable.”

Such painful sentiments, combined with the remorse which Armance was feeling, wrongly no doubt, but none the less painfully for that, made her far from affable to Octave. On the morning after her arrival, she did not come down betimes to the garden; this had been her habit in the past, and she knew very well that Octave was waiting for her there.

In the course of the day, Octave spoke to her two or three times. An extreme shyness which seized her, with the thought that everybody was watching them, paralysed her, and she barely answered him.

That day, at dinner, mention was made of the fortune which chance had just brought to Armance; and she observed that the news seemed to give little pleasure to Octave, who did not say a single word to her about it. The word that was not uttered, had her cousin addressed it to her, would not have given birth in her heart to a pleasure equivalent to one hundredth part of the grief which his silence caused her.

Octave was not listening; he was thinking of the singular manner that Armance had adopted towards him since her return. “No doubt she no longer cares for me,” he was saying to himself, “or she has made some definite engagement with the Chevalier de Bonnivet.” Octave’s indifference to the news of Armance’s fortune opened for the poor girl a fountain of sorrows both new and deep. For the first time, she thought long and earnestly of this

inheritance which had come to her from the North, and which, had Octave loved her, would have made her a more or less suitable match for him.

Octave, to obtain an excuse for writing her a page, had sent to her, in Poitou, a short poem about Greece which had just been published by Lady Nelcombe, a young Englishwoman who was a friend of Madame de Bonnivet. In the whole of France there were but two copies of this poem, which was greatly discussed. Had the copy which had made the journey to Poitou appeared in the drawing-room, a score of indiscreet attempts would have been made to intercept it; Octave begged his cousin to have it sent to his room. Armance, greatly intimidated, could not summon up courage to entrust such a mission to her maid. She went up to the second floor of the mansion and placed the little English poem on the handle of Octave's door, so that he could not enter his room without noticing it.

Octave was greatly troubled; he saw that Armance was definitely reluctant to speak to him. Feeling himself by no means in the humour to speak to her, he left the drawing-room before ten o'clock. He was agitated by a thousand sinister thoughts. Madame d'Aumale was soon bored with the drawing-room: they were talking politics, and in a depressing tone; she pleaded a headache, and by half-past ten had retired to her own apartment. Probably Octave and Madame d'Aumale were taking a stroll together; this idea, which occurred to every one, made Armance turn pale. Whereupon she reproached herself with her very grief as an impropriety which made her less worthy of her cousin's esteem.

Next morning, at an early hour, Armance was with Madame de Malivert, who needed a particular hat. Her maid had gone to the village; Armance hurried to the room in which the hat was; she was obliged to pass by the door of Octave's room. She stood as though thunderstruck on catching sight of the little English poem balanced upon the handle of the door, exactly as she had left it overnight. It was evident that Octave had not gone to his own room.

This was the absolute truth. He had gone out shooting, notwithstanding the recent accident to his arm; and, so as to be able to rise betimes and unobserved, had spent the night in the game-keeper's cottage. He intended to return to the house at eleven, when the bell rang for luncheon, and thus to

escape the reproaches which would have been heaped on him for his imprudence.

On returning to Madame de Malivert's room, Armance found herself obliged to say that she was unwell. From that moment she was a different person. "I am bearing a fit punishment," she told herself, "for the false position in which I have placed myself, and which is so improper in a young person. I have come to the stage of sufferings which I cannot admit even to myself."

When she saw Octave again, Armance had not the courage to put to him any question as to the accident which had prevented him from seeing the little English poem; she would have felt that she was wanting in everything that she owed to herself. This third day was even more sombre than those that had gone before.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Octave, aghast at the alteration which he noticed in Armance's manner, thought that, even as a mere friend, he might hope that she would confide in him the cause of her anxiety; for that she was unhappy he could have no doubt. It was equally clear to him that the Chevalier de Bonnivet was seeking to rob them of every opportunity of exchanging a word in private which chance might offer them on a walk or in the drawing-room.

The hints which Octave threw out now and again met with no response. If she were to confess her grief and abandon the systematic restraint to which she had subjected herself, Armance would first have had to be profoundly moved; Octave was too young and too wretched himself to make this discovery or to profit by it.

Commander de Soubirane had come to dine at Andilly; there was a storm that evening, it rained in torrents. The Commander was invited to stay the night, and was given a room next to the one into which Octave had recently moved, on the second floor. That evening Octave had set himself to revive a little of Armance's gaiety; he wanted to see her smile; he would have seen in that smile a presentment of their old friendship. His gaiety failed completely, and greatly annoyed Armance. As she did not answer him, he was obliged to address his fine speeches to Madame d'Aumale, who was one of the circle and laughed constantly, while Armance preserved a grim silence.

Octave ventured to put a question to her which seemed to require a fairly long answer: he was answered in two words, most drily. In desperation at this proof of his disgrace, he left the room immediately. As he took the air in the garden, he met the game-keeper, and told him that he would be going out shooting early next morning.

Madame d'Aumale, seeing only serious people in the drawing-room whose conversation she found burdensome, decided to retire and did so. This second assignation seemed plain as daylight to the wretched Armance. Furious above all at the duplicity of Octave, who, only that evening, as they

passed from one room to the next, had murmured a few very tender words in her ear, she went up to her own room to fetch a volume which she intended to balance, like the little English poem, upon the handle of Octave's door. As she advanced along the corridor which led to her cousin's room, she heard a sound from within; his door stood ajar, and he was priming his gun. There was a small closet which served as a second entrance to the room that had, been prepared for the Commander, and the door of this closet opened upon the corridor. As ill luck would have it, this door was open. Octave came to the door of his room as Armance approached, and made a movement as though of emerging into the passage. It would have been frightful for Armance to be discovered by Octave at that moment. She had barely time to fling herself behind the open door that offered a way of escape. "As soon as Octave has gone," she said to herself, "I shall arrange the book." She was so troubled by the thought of the liberty she was allowing herself to take, which was a great sin, that she was barely capable of reasoning connectedly.

Octave did indeed come out of his room; he passed by the open door of the little closet in which Armance was hiding; but he went no farther than the end of the corridor. He leaned out of one of the windows and whistled twice, as though to give a signal. As the game-keeper, who was drinking in the servants' hall, did not reply, Octave remained at the window. The silence that reigned in this part of the house, the guests being assembled in the drawing-room on the ground floor and the servants in the basement, was so profound that Armance, whose heart was beating violently, dared not move a muscle. Besides, poor Armance could not blind herself to the fact that Octave had given a signal; and, however unsuited it might be to a lady, it seemed to her that it was one that Madame d'Aumale might very well have arranged.

The window from which Octave was leaning was at the head of the little stair leading down to the first floor, it was impossible for her to pass him. Octave whistled a third time as the clock finished striking eleven; the game-keeper, who was with the others in the servants' hall, did not answer. About half-past eleven, Octave returned to his room.

Armance, who had never in her life been engaged in any enterprise for which she need blush, was so much upset that she found herself unable to walk. It was evident that Octave was giving a signal; either some one would answer or presently he would come out of his room again. The third quarter

sounded from the stable clock, then midnight. The lateness of the hour increased Armance's misgivings; she decided to leave the closet which had given her shelter, and as the last of the twelve strokes sounded she stepped forth. She was so much upset that she, whose step was usually light, made quite a loud noise.

As she moved along the corridor, she caught sight of a figure in the darkness, by the window at the head of the stair, outlined against the sky, and at once recognised M. de Soubirane. He was waiting for his servant to bring him a candle, and, as Armance stood motionless gazing at the face of the Commander whom she had just recognised, the light of the candle, which was now being carried upstairs, appeared upon the ceiling of the corridor.

Had she kept her head Armance might have attempted to hide behind a big cupboard which stood in the corner of the corridor, near the stair, and might thus have been saved. Rooted to the ground with terror, she lost a moment or two, and, as the servant reached the head of the stair, the light of the candle shone full upon her, and the Commander recognised her. A hideous smile appeared on his lips. His suspicions of the understanding between Armance and his nephew were confirmed, while at the same time he had found a way to ruin them for ever. "Saint–Pierre," he said to his servant, "is not that Mademoiselle Armance de Zohiloff standing there?" "Yes, Sir," said the servant, greatly confused. "Octave is better, I hope, Mademoiselle?" said the Commander in a coarse, bantering tone, and walked past her.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Armance, in despair, saw herself at once disgraced for ever and betrayed by her lover. She sat down for a moment on the landing of the stair. She decided to go and knock at the door of Madame de Malivert's maid. The girl was asleep and did not answer. Madame de Malivert, with a vague fear that her son might be ill, took her nightlight and came to the door of her own room; she was alarmed by the expression on Armance's face. "What has happened to Octave?" cried Madame de Malivert. "Nothing, Madame, nothing at all to Octave, it is only I who am in distress and miserable at having disturbed your sleep. My idea was to speak to Madame Dérien and to ask for you only if I was told that you were still awake." "My child, you increase my alarm with all these Madames. Something strange has happened. Is Octave ill?" "No, Mama," said Armance and burst into tears, "it is only that I am a ruined girl."

Madame de Malivert took her into her bedroom, and there Armance told her what had just happened to her, concealing nothing and passing nothing over in silence, not even her own jealousy. Her heart, crushed by all her miseries, had not the strength to keep anything back.

Madame de Malivert was appalled. Suddenly she exclaimed: "There is no time to be lost, give me my pelisse, my poor child, my dear child," and she kissed her again and again with all the passion of a mother. "Light my candle, and do you stay here." Madame de Malivert ran to her son's room; fortunately the door was not locked; she entered quietly, awoke Octave and told him what had occurred. "My brother may ruin us," said Madame de Malivert, "and, to judge by appearances, he will not miss the opportunity. Rise, go to his room, tell him that I have had a sort of seizure in your room. Can you think of anything better?" "Yes, Mama, to marry Armance tomorrow, if that angel will still have me."

This unexpected speech was a fulfilment of Madame de Malivert's dearest wish; she embraced her son, but added, on second thoughts: "Your uncle does not like Armance, he may talk; he will promise to keep silence, but he

has his servant who will talk by his order, and whom he will then dismiss for having talked. I stick to my idea of a seizure. This make-believe will keep us painfully busy for three days, but your wife's honour is more precious than anything else. Remember to appear greatly alarmed. As soon as you have told the Commander, go down to my room, tell Armance of our plan. When the Commander passed her on the stair, I was in your room, and she was going to fetch Madame Dérien." Octave hastened to tell his uncle, whom he found wide awake. The Commander looked at him with a derisive expression which turned all his emotion to anger. Octave left M. de Soubirane to fly to his mother's room: "Is it possible," he said to Armance, "that you have not been in love with the Chevalier de Bonnivet, and that he is not the mysterious husband of whom you spoke to me once, long ago?" "I have a horror of the Chevalier. But you, Octave, are not you in love with Madame d'Aumale?" "Never as long as I live will I see her again or give her another thought," said Octave. "Dear Armance, deign to say that you accept me as a husband. Heaven is punishing me for having kept you in the dark as to my shooting expeditions, I was whistling for the keeper, who did not answer." Octave's protestations had all the warmth but not all the delicacy of true passion; Armance thought she could make out that he was performing a duty while his thoughts were elsewhere. "You are not in love with me just now," she said to him. "I love you with all my heart and soul, but I am mad with rage at that ignoble Commander, vile man, upon whose silence we cannot count." Octave renewed his solicitations. "Are you sure that it is love that is speaking," Armance said to him, "perhaps it is only generosity, and you are in love with Madame d'Aumale. You used to have a horror of marriage, this sudden conversion seems to me suspicious." "In heaven's name, dear Armance, do not let us waste any more time; all the rest of my life shall answer to you for my love." He was so far convinced of the truth of what he was saying that he ended by convincing her also. He hastened upstairs and found the Commander with his mother, whom her joy at the prospect of Octave's marriage had given the courage to play her part admirably. Nevertheless, the Commander did not seem to be at all convinced of his sister's seizure. He ventured upon a pleasantry with regard to Armance's nocturnal roamings. "Sir, I have still one sound arm," cried Octave, springing to his feet and throwing himself upon him; "if you say one word more, I shall fling you out of that window." Octave's restrained fury made the Commander blench, he remembered in time his nephew's mad outbursts and saw that he was worked up to the pitch of committing a crime.

Armance appeared at that moment, but Octave could think of nothing to say to her. He could not even look lovingly at her, this calm after the storm left him powerless. The Commander, to make the best of a bad business, having tried to say something light and pleasant, Octave was afraid of his wounding Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's feelings. "Sir," he said to him, gripping his arm tightly. "I must ask you to withdraw at once to your own room." As the Commander hesitated, Octave seized him by the arm, carried him off to his room, flung him inside, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

When he rejoined the ladies he was furious. "If I do not kill that base and mercenary creature," he cried, as though talking to himself, "he will dare to speak evil of my wife. A curse upon him!"

"As far as I am concerned, I like M. de Soubirane," said Armance in her alarm, seeing the distress that Octave was causing his mother. "I like M. de Soubirane, and if you go on being furious I may think that you arc cross because of a certain rather sudden engagement which we have just announced to him."

"You do not believe it," Octave interrupted her, "I am sure of that. But you are right, as you always are. When all is said and done, I ought to be thankful to that base creature;" and gradually his wrath subsided. Madame de Malivert had herself carried to her room, keeping up admirably the pretence of a seizure. She sent to Paris for her own Doctor.

The rest of the night passed charmingly. The gaiety of this happy mother infected Octave and his mistress. Led on by Madame de Malivert's merry speeches, Armance, who was still greatly upset and had lost all self-control, ventured to let Octave see how dear he was to her. She had the intense pleasure of seeing him jealous of the Chevalier de Bonnivet. It was this fortunate sentiment which accounted in a manner so gratifying to her for his apparent indifference during the last few days. Mesdames d'Aumale and de Bonnivet, who had been awakened in spite of Madame de Malivert's orders to the contrary, did not appear until the night was far spent, and the whole party retired to bed as dawn was breaking.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

This is the state of man: today he puts forth

The tender leaves of hope; tomorrow blossoms,

And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;

The third day comes a frost, a killing frost; . . .

And then he falls — see his character.

KING HENRY VIII, Act III.

[The last three words are added by Beyle. The source is cited in all the editions as King Henry III. — C. K. S. M.]

Early on the following morning Madame de Malivert proceeded to Paris to lay the plan of Octave's marriage before her husband. All day long he held out against it; "not that you are to suppose," said the Marquis, "that I have not long been expecting this stupid proposal. I cannot pretend to be surprised. Mademoiselle de Zohiloff is not absolutely penniless, I agree; her Russian uncles have died at a very opportune moment for her. But her fortune is no greater than what we might find elsewhere, and — what is of the greatest importance to my son — there is no family connexion in this alliance; I can see nothing m it but a deplorable similarity of character. Octave has not enough relatives in society, and his reserved manner makes him no friends. He will be a Peer when his cousin and I are gone, that is all, and, as you know very well, my dear, in France, the value of a title depends on the man who bears it. I belong to the older generation, as these insolent fellows say; I shall soon pass away, and with me all the ties that can connect my son with society; for he is an instrument in the hands of our dear Marquise de Bonnivet, rather than an object of her pursuit. We ought, in seeking a wife for Octave, to put social support above fortune even. I grant

him, if you like, the sort of exceptional merit which succeeds by itself. I have always observed that these sublime beings require to have their virtues preached, and my son, so far from flattering the people who make or mar reputations, seems to take a malicious pleasure in defying them to their faces. That is not the way to achieve success. With a numerous connexion, well established, he would have passed in society as a worthy candidate for ministerial office; he has no one to sing his praises, he will be regarded as merely an original."

Madame de Malivert protested volublv against this expression. She could see that some one had been buttonholing her husband.

His eloquence increased: "Yes, my dear, I would not swear that the readiness to take offence which Octave shews, and his passion for what are called principles, now that the Jacobins have changed all our customs including our language, may not lead him one day into the worst excess of folly, into what you call the opposition. The one outstanding man whom your opposition could boast, the Comte de Mirabeau, ended by selling himself; that is an ugly ending, and one that I should not care to see my son make." "Nor need you have any fear of his doing so," Madame de Malivert parried him boldly. "No, it is over the other precipice that my son's fortunes will be engulfed. This marriage will only make him a bumpkin, buried in the heart of the country, within the four walls of his manor. His sombre nature makes him too much inclined as it is to that sort of life. Our dear Armance has an odd way of looking at things; so far from attempting to alter what I find reprehensible in Octave, she will encourage him in his plebeian habits, and by this marriage you will destroy our family." "Octave will one day be summoned to the House of Peers, he will be a noble representative of the youth of France, and will win personal consideration by his eloquence." "There is too much competition. All these young Peers lay claim to eloquence. Why, good lord, they will be in their Chamber what they are in society, perfectly well mannered, highly educated, and that is all. All these young representatives of the youth of France will be the most bitter enemies of Octave, who has at least a point of view of his own."

Madame de Malivert returned late in the day to Andilly, with a charming letter for Armance, in which M. de Malivert besought her hand for his son.

Tired as she was by the exertions of the day, Madame de Malivert hastened to find Madame de Bonnivet, who must learn of the marriage from her lips alone. She let her see M. de Malivert's letter to Armance; she was only too glad to take this precaution against the people who might make her husband change his mind. This action was, moreover, necessary, the Marquise being in a sense Armance's guardian. This position sealed her lips. Madame de Malivert was grateful for the affection which Madame de Bonnivet shewed for Octave without at all seeming to approve personally of the marriage. The Marquise took refuge in enthusiastic praise of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's character. Madame de Malivert did not forget to mention the overtures that she had made to Armance some months earlier, and the noble refusal made by the young orphan, who was then still penniless.

"Ah, it is not about Armance's noble qualities that my affection for Octave needs to be reassured," said the Marquise. "Any that she may have come from us. These family marriages are suitable only among the rich and powerful bankers; as their principal object is money, they are certain of finding it without trouble."

"We are coming to a time," replied Madame de Malivert, "when favour at Court, unless he chooses to purchase it by incessant personal services, will be merely a secondary object for a man of high birth, a Peer of France with a great fortune. Look at our friend Lord N —— — ; his immense influence in his own country springs from the fact that he nominates eleven Members of the House of Commons. He never even sees his King."

It was in similar terms that Madame de Malivert met the objections raised by her brother, whose opposition was far stronger. Furious at the last night's scene and fully determined not to let the opportunity pass of making a great show of indignation, he wished, when he should allow his wrath to be appeased, to place his nephew under a burden of undying gratitude.

Octave, by himself, he would have forgiven, for after all he must either forgive him or abandon those dreams of wealth which had been occupying his thoughts, to the exclusion of all else, for the last year. As for the midnight scene, his vanity would have had the consolation, among his intimate friends, of Octave's well-known mania for throwing his mother's footmen out of windows.

But the thought of Armance reigning with absolute power over the heart of a husband who loved her to madness drove M. de Soubirane to declare that never again would he shew his face at Andilly. They were all very happy at Andilly, they took him more or less at his word, and, after offering him all sorts of apologies and invitations, proceeded to forget him.

Since he had seen his position strengthened by the arrival of the Chevalier de Bonnivet, who furnished him with good arguments and, at a pinch, with ready-made phrases, his antipathy towards Mademoiselle de Zo-hiloff had turned to hatred. He could not forgive her allusions to Russian bravery as displayed beneath the walls of Ismailoff, while the Knights of Malta, sworn enemies of the Turks, sat idly upon their rock. The Commander might have forgotten an epigram provoked by himself; but the fact is that there was money at the bottom of all this anger with Armance. The Commander's head, never at any time too strong, was absolutely turned by the idea of making a vast fortune on 'Change. As is universal among commonplace natures, about the age of fifty, the interest that he used to take in the things of this world had died away, and boredom had made its appearance; as might also be expected, the Commander had aspired successively to be a man of letters, a political intriguer and a patron of the Italian opera. Only some mischance had prevented his being a lay Jesuit.

Finally, the sport of gambling on 'Change haa appeared and had proved a sovereign remedy for a vast boredom. And to gamble on 'Change he had all the requirements save only funds and credit. The indemnity had turned up at a most opportune moment, and the Commander had vowed that he would have no difficulty in controlling his nephew, who was a mere philosopher. He fully intended to invest on 'Change a good share of the sum that Octave would receive from his mother's indemnity.

At the height of his passion for millions, Armance had presented herself as an insuperable obstacle in the Commander's path. Now her adoption into the family destroyed forever his hold over his nephew and with it all his castles in the air crumbled. The Commander did not waste any time in Paris, but went about fulminating against his nephew's marriage in the houses of Madame la Duchesse de C —— — , the head of the family, Madame la Duchesse d'Ancre, Madame de la Ronze, Madame de Claix, whom he

visited daily. All these friends of the family soon decided that the marriage was most unsuitable.

In less than a week the young Vicomte's intended marriage was common knowledge and was no less commonly deplored. The great ladies who had marriageable daughters were furious.

"Madame de Malivert," said the Comtesse de Claix, "has the cruelty to force that poor Octave into marrying her companion, evidently to save the salary she would have to pay the girl; it's a shame."

In the midst of all this the Commander felt that he was forgotten in Paris, where he was bored to death. The general outcry against Octave's marriage could be no more permanent than anything else. He must take advantage of this universal storm while it still lasted. A marriage once arranged can be broken off only by prompt action.

Finally all these sound arguments and, more than they, his own boredom brought it to pass that one fine morning the Commander was seen to arrive at Andilly, where he resumed his old room and his ordinary life as though nothing had occurred.

Every one was most polite to the newcomer, who did not fail to make the most cordial overtures to his niece to be. "Friendship has its illusions no less than love," he said to Armance, "and if I found fault at first with certain proposals, it was because I too am passionately devoted to Octave."

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Ses maux les plus cruels sont ceux qu'il se fait lui-même.

BALZAC.

[This quotation is presumably from the seventeenth century letter writer, Guez de Balzac, whom Beyle in Henri Brulard compares with Chateaubriand. —— C. K. R. M.]

Armance might perhaps have been taken in by these polite overtures, but she did not stop to think about the Commander; she had other grounds for anxiety.

Now that there was no longer any obstacle in the way of his marriage, Octave was given to fits of sombre ill-temper which he found difficulty in concealing; he pleaded a series of violent headaches, and would go out riding by himself in the woods of Ecoucn and Senlis. He would sometimes cover seven or eight leagues at a gallop. These symptoms appeared ominous to Armance; she remarked that at certain moments he gazed at her with eyes in which suspicion was more evident than love.

It was true that these fits of sombre ill-temper ended as often as not in transports of love and in a passionate abandonment which she had never observed in him in the days of their happiness. It was thus that she was beginning to describe, in her letters to Méry de Tersan, the time that had passed between Octave's injury and her own fatal act of imprudence in hiding in the closet by the Commander's room.

Since the announcement of her marriage, Armance had had the consolation of being able to open her heart to her dearest friend. Méry, brought up in a far from united family which was always being torn asunder by fresh intrigues, was quite capable of giving her sound advice.

During one of these long walks which she took with Octave in the garden of the mansion, beneath Madame de Malivert's windows, Armance said to him one day: "There is something so extraordinary in your sadness that I, who love you and you alone in the world, have found it necessary to seek the advice of a friend before venturing to speak to you as I am going now to speak. You were happier before that cruel night when I was so imprudent, and I have no need to tell you that all my own happiness has vanished far more rapidly than yours. I have a suggestion to make to you: let us return to a state of perfect happiness and to that pleasant intimacy which was the delight of my life, after I knew that you loved me, until that fatal idea arose of our marriage. I shall take upon myself entire responsibility for so odd a change. I shall tell people that I have made a vow never to marry. They will condemn the idea, it will impair the good opinion that some of my friends are kind enough to hold of me; what do I care? Public opinion is after all important to a girl with money only so long as she thinks of marry ing; and I certainly shall never marry." Octave's only answer was to take her hand, while tears streamed from his eyes in abundance. "Oh, my dear angel," he said to her, "how far superior you are to me!" The sight of these tears on the face of a man not ordinarily subject to that weakness combined with so simple a speech to destroy all Armance's resolution.

At length she said to him with an effort: "Answer me, my friend. Accept a proposal which is going to restore my happiness. We shall continue to spend our time together just as much as before." She saw a servant approaching them. "The luncheon bell is going to ring," she went on in some distress, "your father will be arriving from Paris, afterwards I shall not have another opportunity of speaking to you, and if I do not speak to you I shall be unhappy and agitated all day, for I shall be a little doubtful of you." "You! Doubtful of me!" said Octave gazing at her in a way which for a moment banished all her fears.

After walking for some minutes in silence: "No, Octave," Armance went on, "I am not doubtful of you; if I doubted your love, I hope that God would grant me the blessing of death; but after all you have been less happy since your marriage was settled." "I shall talk to you as I should to myself," said Octave impetuously. "There are moments in which I am far more happy, for now at last I have the certainty that nothing in the world can separate me from you; I shall be able to see you and to talk to you at every hour of the

day, but," he went on . . . and fell into one of those moods of gloomy silence which filled Armance with despair.

The dread of hearing the luncheon bell, which was going to separate them for the rest of the day perhaps, gave her for the second time the courage to break in upon Octave's musings: "But what, dear?" she asked him, "tell me all; that fearful but is making me a hundred times more wretched than anything you could add to it."

"Very well!" said Octave stopping short, turning to face her and gazing fixedly at her, no longer with the gaze of a lover but so as to be able to read her thoughts, "you shall know all; death itself would be less painful to me than the story which I have to tell you, but also I love you far more than life. Do I need to swear to you, no longer as your lover" (and at that moment his eyes were indeed no longer the eyes of a lover) "but as an honourable man and as I should swear to your father, if heaven in its mercy had spared him to us, do I need to swear to you that I love you and you only in the world, as I have never loved before and shall never love again? To be parted from you would be death to me and a hundred times worse than death; but I have a fearful secret which I have never confided to any one, this secret will explain to you my fatal vagaries."

As he stammered rather than spoke these words, Octave's features contracted, there was a hint of madness in his eyes; one would have said he no longer saw Armance; his lips twitched convulsively. Armance, more wretched than he, leaned upon the tub of an orange tree; she shuddered on recognising that fatal orange tree by which she had fainted when Octave spoke harshly to her after the night he had spent in the forest. Octave had stopped and stood facing her as though horror-stricken and not daring to continue. His startled eyes gazed fixedly in front of him as though he beheld a vision of a monster.

"Dear friend," said Armance, "I was more unhappy when you spoke cruelly to me by this same orange tree months ago; at that time I doubted your love. What am I saying?" she corrected herself with passion. "On that fatal day I was certain that you did not love me. Ah! my friend, how far happier I am today!"

The accent of truth with which Armance uttered these last words seemed to moderate the bitter, angry grief to which Octave was a prey. Armance, forgetful of her customary reserve, clasped his hand passionately and urged him to speak; her face came for a moment so close to his that he could feel her warm breath. This sensation moved him to tenderness; speech became easy to him.

“Yes, dear friend,” he said to her, gazing at length into her eyes, “I adore you, you need not doubt my love; but what is the man who adores you? He is a monster.”

With these words, Octave’s tenderness seemed to forsake him; all at once he flew into a fury, tore himself irom the arms of Armance who tried in vain to hold him back, and took to his heels. Armance remained motionless. At that instant the bell rang for luncheon. More dead than alive, she had only to shew her face before Madame de Malivert to obtain leave not to remain at table. Octave’s servant came in a moment later to say that a sudden engagement had obliged his master to set off at a gallop for Paris.

The party at luncheon was silent and chilly; the only happy person was the Commander. Struck by this simultaneous absence of both the voung people, he detected tears of anxiety in his sister’s eyes; he felt a momentary jov. It seemed to him that the affair of the marriage was no longer going quite so well: “marriages have been broken off later than this,” he said to himself, and the intensity of his preoccupation prevented him from making himself agreeable to Mesdames d’Aumale and de Bonnivet. The arrival of the Marquis, who had come from Paris, notwithstanding a threatening of gout, and shewed great annoyance at not finding Octave whom he had warned of his coming, increased the Commander’s joy. “The moment is auspicious,” he told himself, “for making the voice of reason heard.” As soon as luncheon was over, Mesdames d’Aumale and de Bonnivet went upstairs to their rooms; Madame de Malivert disappeared into Armance’s room, and the Commander was animated, that is to say happy, for an hour and a quarter, which he employed in trying to shake his brother-inlaw’s determination in the matter of Octave’s marriage.

There was a strong vein of honesty underlying everything that the old Marquis said in reply. “The indemnity belongs to your sister,” he said; “I

myself am a pauper. It is this indemnity which makes it possible for us to think of establishing Octave in life; your sister is more anxious than he, I think, for this marriage with Armance, who, for that matter, has some fortune of her own; in all this I can do nothing, as a man of honour, but express my opinion; it would be impossible for me to speak with authority; I should have the air of wishing to deprive my wife of the pleasure of spending the rest of her life with her dearest friend."

Madame de Malivert had found Armance greatly agitated but scarcely communicative. Urged by the call of affection, Armance spoke in the vaguest terms of a trifling quarrel, such as occurs at times between people who are most fervently in love. "I am sure that Octave is to blame," said Madame de Malivert as she rose to go, "otherwise you would tell me all;" and she left Armance to herself. This was doing her a great service. It soon became plain to her that Octave had committed some serious crime, the dread consequences of which he might perhaps have exaggerated, and that as a man of honour he would not allow her to unite her destiny with that of one who was perhaps a murderer, without letting her know the whole truth.

Dare we say that this explanation of Octave's eccentricity restored his cousin to a sort of tranquillity? She went down to the garden, half hoping to find him there. She felt herself at that moment entirely rid of the profound jealousy which Madame d'Aumale had inspired in her; she did not, it is true, admit to herself that this might account for the state of blissful emotion in which she found herself. She felt herself transported by the most tender and most generous pity.

"If we have to leave France," she said to herself, "and go into banishment far away, were it even in America, well, away we shall go," she said to herself with joy, "and the sooner the better." And her imagination began to wander, picturing a life of complete solitude on a desert island, ideas too romantic and, what is more, too familiar on the pages of novels to be recorded here. Neither on that day nor on the next did Octave put in an appearance: only on the evening of the second day Armance received a letter dated from Paris. Never had she been so happy. The most burning, the most abandoned passion glowed in this letter. "Ah! If he had been here at the moment when he wrote, he would have told me all." Octave let it be understood that he was detained in Paris because he was ashamed to tell her his secret. "It is not at

every moment," the letter went on, "that I shall have the courage to utter that fatal word, even to you, for it may destroy the sentiments which you deign to feel for me and which are everything to me. Do not press me upon this subject, dear friend." Armance made haste to reply to him by a servant who was waiting. "Your greatest crime," she told him, "is your remaining away from us," and she was no less surprised than joyful when, half an hour after writing to him, she saw Octave appear, he having come out to await her answer at Labarre near Andilly.

The days that followed were days of unbroken happiness. The illusions induced by the passion that was animating Armance were so strange that presently she found herself quite accustomed to the idea of being in love with a murderer. It seemed to her that it must at the very least be murder, this crime of which Octave hesitated to admit himself guilty. Her cousin spoke too carefully to exaggerate his ideas, and he had used these very words: "I am a monster."

In the first love letter that she had ever written to him or to any one, she had promised him that she would not ask him questions; this vow was sacred in her eyes. Octave's letter to her in reply she treasured. She had read it a score of times, she formed the habit of writing every evening to the man who was to be her husband; and as it would have made her blush to speak his name to her maid, she concealed her first letter in the tub of that orange tree which Octave had good reason to know.

She informed him of this in a word one morning as they were sitting down to luncheon. He left the room with the excuse that he had to give an order, and Armance had the indescribable pleasure, when he returned a quarter of an hour later, of reading in his eyes the expression of the keenest happiness and tenderest gratitude.

A day or two after this, Armancc found the courage to write to him: "I believe you to be guilty of some great crime; it shall be our lifelong duty to atone for it, if atonement be possible; but the strange thing is that I am perhaps even more tenderly devoted to you than before this confidence.

"I feel how much this avowal must have cost you, it is the first great sacrifice that you have ever made for me, and, let me tell you, it is only from

that moment that I have been cured of an ugly sentiment which I too scarcely dared confess to you. I imagine the worst. And so it seems to me that you need not make me a more detailed confession before a certain ceremony is performed. You will not have deceived me, I swear to you. God pardons the penitent, and I am sure that you are exaggerating your offence; were it as grave as it can be, I, who have seen your anxieties, forgive you. You will make me a full confession in a year from now, perhaps you will then be less afraid of me. . . . I cannot, however, promise to love you more dearly."

A number of letters written in this strain of angelic goodness had almost made Octave decide to confide in writing to his mistress the secret that she was entitled to learn; but the shame, the embarrassment of writing such a letter still held him back.

He went to Paris to consult M. Dolier, the relative who had acted as his second. He knew that M. Dolier was a man of honour, endowed with a straightforward mind and not clever enough to compound with his duty or to indulge in illusions. Octave asked him whether he was absolutely bound to confide in Mademoiselle de Zohiloff a fatal secret, which he would not have hesitated to disclose, before his marriage, to her father or guardian. He went so far as to shew M. Dolier the part of Armance's letter which we have quoted above.

"You can have no excuse for not speaking," was the gallant officer's reply, "it is your bounden duty. You must not take advantage of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's generosity. It would be unworthy of you to deceive any one, and it would be even more beneath the noble Octave to deceive a poor orphan who has perhaps no friend but himself among all the men of her family."

Octave had told himself all this a thousand times, but it acquired an entirely new force when it issued from the lips of a firm and honourable man.

Octave thought he heard the voice of destiny speaking.

He took his leave of M. Dolier vowing that he would write the fatal letter in the first café that he should find on his right hand after leaving his cousin's house; he kept his word. He wrote a letter of ten lines and addressed it to Mademoiselle de Zohiloff, at the Château de —— — , by Andilly.

On leaving the café, he looked about him for a letterbox; as luck would have it, there was none to be seen. Presently a remnant of that awkward feeling which urged him to postpone such a confession as long as Possible, succeeded in persuading him that a letter of such importance ought not to be entrusted to the post, that it was better that he should place it himself in the tub of the orange tree in the garden at Andilly. Octave had not the intelligence to see in the idea of this postponement a lingering illusion of a passion that was barely conquered.

The essential thing, in his situation, was for him not to give way an inch to the repugnance which M. Dolier's stern advice had helped him to overcome. He mounted his horse to carry his letter to Andilly.

Since the morning on which the Commander had had a suspicion of some misunderstanding between the lovers, the natural frivolity of his character had given way to an almost incessant desire to do them an injury.

He had taken as confidant the Chevalier de Bonnivet. All the time that the Commander had formerly employed in dreaming of speculations on 'Change and in jotting down figures in a pocket-book, he now devoted to seeking a way in which to break off his nephew's engagement.

His proposals at first were none too reasonable; the Chevalier de Bonnivet regularised his plan of attack. He suggested to him that he should have Armance followed, and, by spending a few louis, the Commander made spies of all the servants in the house. They told him that Octave and Armance were corresponding, and that they concealed their letters in the tub of an orange tree bearing a certain number.

Such imprudence appeared incredible to the Chevalier de Bonnivet. He left the Commander to think over it. Seeing at the end of a week that M. de Soubirane had progressed farther than the obvious idea of reading the amorous expressions of a pair of lovers, he skilfully reminded him that, among a score of different foibles, he had had, for six months, a passion for autograph letters; the Commander had employed at that time a very clever copyist. This idea penetrated that thick skull but produced no effect. It had the company there, however, of a burning hatred.

The Chevalier hesitated long before risking himself with such a man. The sterility of his associate's mind was discouraging. Moreover, at the first check, he might confess everything. Fortunately, the Chevalier remembered a vulgar novel in which the villain has the lovers' handwriting copied and fabricates forged letters. The Commander read scarcely anything, but had at one time worshipped fine bindings. The Chevalier decided to make a final attempt; should this prove unsuccessful, he would abandon the Commander to all the aridity of his own methods. One of Thouvenin's men, lavishly paid, worked day and night and clothed in a superb binding the novel in which the trick of forging letters occurred. The Chevalier took this sumptuous book, brought it out to Andilly and stained with coffee the page on which the substitution of the forged letters was described.

"I am in despair," he said one morning to the Commander as he entered his room. "Madame de ——— , who is mad about her books, as you know, has had this miserable novel bound in the most beautiful style. I was ass enough to pick it up in her house, and have stained one of the pages. Now you have collected or invented the most astounding secrets for doing everything, could not you shew me how to forge a new page?" The Chevalier, having discoursed at great length and used the expressions most akin to the idea that he wished to suggest, left the volume in the Commander's room.

He mentioned it to him at least ten times before it occurred to M. de Soubirane to hatch a quarrel between the lovers by means of forged letters.

He was so proud of this idea that at first he was inclined to exaggerate its importance; he spoke of it in this light to the Chevalier, who was horrified at so immoral an action and left that evening for Paris. A couple of days later the Commander, in the course of conversation with him, returned to his idea. "To substitute a forged letter would be atrocious," cried the Chevalier. "Is your love for your nephew so strong that the end justifies the means?"

But the reader is doubtless no less tired than ourselves of these sordid details; details in which we see the cankered fruit of the new generation competing with the frivolity of the old.

The Commander, still full of pity for the Chevalier's innocence, proved to him that, in an almost hopeless cause, the most certain way to be defeated

was to attempt nothing.

M. de Soubirane boldly rescued from his sister's hearth a number of scraps of Armance's handwriting, and easily obtained from his penman copies which it was hard to distinguish from their originals. He had already begun to base his hopes of a breach of Octave's engagement upon the most definite anticipations of the intrigues of the coming winter, the distractions of the ballroom, the advantageous offers which he would be able to have made to the family. The Chevalier de Bonnivet was filled with admiration for his character. "Why is not this man a Minister," he said to himself, "the highest offices would be mine. But with this cursed Charter, public debates, the liberty of the press, never could such a man become a Minister, however noble his birth." Finally, after he had waited patiently for a fortnight, it occurred to the Commander to compose a letter from Armance to Méry de Tersan, her dearest friend. The Chevalier was for the second time on the point of throwing up the sponge. M. de Soubirane had spent two days in drafting a model letter sparkling with wit and overloaded with delicate fancies, a reminiscence of the letters he himself used to write in 1789.

"Our generation is more serious than that," the Chevalier told him, "you should aim at being pedantic, grave, boring. . . . Your letter is charming; the Chevalier de Laclos would not have disowned it, but it will not take in any one today." "Always today, today!" retorted the Commander, "your Laclos was nothing but a fool. I do not know why all you young men model yourselves on him. His characters drivel like barbers," etc., etc.

The Chevalier was enchanted with the Commander's hatred for Laclos; he put up a stout defence of the author of Les liaisons dangereuses, was completely routed, and finally obtained a model letter, not nearly emphatic or German enough for his purpose, but still quite reasonable. The model letter drafted after so stormy a discussion was presented by the Commander to his copier of autographs who, thinking that it was merely a question of epistolary gallantry, raised only the objections necessary to secure ample payment for himself, and produced a lifelike imitation of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff's hand. Armance was supposed to be writing her friend Méry de Tersan a long letter about her approaching marriage to Octave.

As he returned to Andilly with the letter written according to M. Dolier's suggestions, the predominant thought in Octave's mind throughout his ride had been that he must make Armance promise not to read his letter until they had parted for the night. Octave intended to leave the following morning at daybreak; he was quite certain that Armance would write in reply. He hoped thus somewhat to diminish the awkwardness of a first meeting after such a confession. He had made up his mind to this course only because he discerned an element of heroism in Armance's attitude. For a long time past he had never surprised her at any moment in her life when she was not dominated by the happiness or grief arising from the sentiment that united them. Octave had no doubt that she felt a violent passion for himself. Arriving at Andilly he sprang from the saddle, ran to the garden and there, as he was hiding his letter beneath some leaves in the corner of the orange-tree tub, found one from Armance.

CHAPTER THIRTY

He withdrew rapidly to the shelter of a lime alley to be able to read it without interruption. He saw from the opening lines that this letter was intended for Mademoiselle Méry de Tersan (it was the letter composed by the Commander). But the opening lines had so disturbed him that he went on, and read: “I do not know how to reply to your reproaches. You are right, my kind friend, I am mad to complain. This arrangement is, from every point of view, far better than anything a poor girl, who has woken up to find herself rich, and has no family to establish and protect her, could expect. He is a man of parts and of the highest virtue: perhaps he has too much virtue for me. Shall I confess it to you? The times have indeed changed; what would have been the height of bliss for me a few months ago is no more now than a duty; has heaven withheld from me the power to love constantly? I am completing an arrangement that is reasonable and advantageous, as I repeat to myself incessantly, but my heart no longer knows those sweet transports that I used to feel at the sight of the most perfect man, in my eyes, to be found anywhere upon earth, the one being worthy to be loved. I see today that his mood is inconstant, or rather why accuse him? It is not he that has changed; my whole misfortune is that there is inconstancy in my heart. I am about to contract a marriage that is advantageous, honourable, in every sense; but, dear Méry, I blush to confess it to you; I am no longer marrying the person whom I loved above all; I find him serious and at times barely entertaining, and it is with him that I am going to spend my life! Probably in some lonely manor house in the depths of the country where we shall promote the spread of pupil-teaching and vaccination. Perhaps, dear friend, I shall look back with regret upon Madame de Bonnivet’s drawing-room; who would have said so six months ago? This strange fickleness in my character is what distresses me most. Is not Octave the most remarkable young man we have seen this winter? But I have had so miserable a girlhood! I should like an amusing husband. Farewell. The day after tomorrow I am to be allowed to go to Paris; at eleven I shall be at your door.”

Octave stood horror-stricken. All at once he awoke as though from a dream and ran to retrieve the letter which he had just left in the tub of the orange

tree: he tore it up furiously, and put the fragments in his pocket.

“I needed,” he said to himself coldly, “the wildest and profoundest passion if I was to be pardoned for my fatal secret. In defiance of all reason, in defiance of every vow I had made to myself throughout my life, I thought I had met with a creature above the rest of humanity. To deserve such an exception, I should have had to be pleasant and gay, and those are the qualities that I lack. I have been mistaken; there is nothing left for me but to die.

“It would doubtless be an offence against the laws of honour not to make a confession, were I involving for all time the destiny of Mademoiselle de Zohiloff. But I can leave her free within a month. She will be a young widow, rich, very beautiful, no doubt greatly sought after; and the name of Malivert will be of greater use to her in finding an amusing husband than the still unfamiliar name of Zohiloff.”

It was in this frame of mind that Octave entered his mother’s room, where he found Armance who was talking of him and longing for his return; soon she was as pale and almost as unhappy as himself, and yet he had just said to his mother that he could not endure the delays that kept postponing the date of his marriage. “There are plenty of people who would be glad to mar my happiness,” he had gone on to say; “I am certain of it. Why do we need all these preparations? Armance is richer than I am, and it is not likely that she will ever want for clothes or jewels. I venture to hope that before the end of the second year of our marriage she will be gay, happy, enjoying all the pleasures of Paris, and that she will never repent of the step she is now about to take. I am sure that she will never be buried in the country in an old manor house.”

There was something so strange in the sound of Octave’s words, so little in keeping with the aspiration that they expressed, that almost simultaneously Armance and Madame de Malivert felt their eyes fill with tears. Armance could barely find strength to reply: “Ah, dear friend, how cruel you are!”

Greatly vexed that he had not managed to assume an air of happiness, Octave left the room abruptly. His determination to end his marriage by death imparted a certain harshness and cruelty to his manner.

Having deplored with Armance what she called her son's madness, Madame de Malivert came to the conclusion that solitude was of no avail'to a character that was naturally sombre. "Do you love him still in spite of this defect from which he is the first to suffer?" said Madame de Malivert; "consult your heart, my child, I have no wish to make you unhappy, everything may yet be broken off." "Oh, Mama, I believe that I love him even more than ever, now that I no longer think him so perfect." "Very well, my pet," replied Madame de Malivert, "I shall have you married in a week from now. Until then, be indulgent to him, he loves you, you cannot doubt that. You know what he feels about his duty to his family, and yet you saw his fury when he thought you were being made the butt of my brother's wicked tongue. Be kind and good, my dear child, with this creature who is being made wretched by some odd prejudice against marriage." Armance, to whom these words spoken at random presented so true a meaning, increased her attentions and tender devotion to Octave.

The following day, at dawn, Octave came to Paris, and spent a very considerable sum, almost two-thirds of what he had at his disposal, in buying costly jewelry which he included among the wedding presents.

He called upon his father's lawyer and made him insert in the marriage contract certain clauses extremely advantageous to the bride to be, which, in the event of her widowhood, assured her the most ample independence.

It was with business of this sort that Octave occupied the ten days that elapsed between the discovery of Armance's supposed letter and his marriage. These days were for Octave more tranquil than he could have dared to hope. What makes misery so cruel to tender hearts is a little rav of hope which sometimes lingers.

Octave had no hope. His course was decided, and for a stout heart, however hard the part he may have to play, it dispenses him from reflecting upon his fate, and asks no more of him than the courage to perform it scrupulously; which is a small matter.

What most impressed Octave, when the necessary preparations and business of all sorts left him to himself, was a prolonged astonishment: What! So Mademoiselle de Zohiloflf no longer meant anything to him! He was so far

accustomed to believe firmly in the eternity of his love and of their intimate relation, that at every moment he kept forgetting that all was changed, he was incapable of imagining life without Armance. Almost every morning, he was obliged when he awoke to remind himself of his misery. It was a cruel moment. But presently the thought of death came to console him and to restore calm to his heart. At the same time, towards the end of this interval of ten days, Armance's extreme tenderness caused him some moments of weakness. During their solitary walks, thinking herself authorised by the imminence of their marriage, Armance allowed herself on more than one occasion to take Octave's hand, which was beautifully shaped, and to raise it to her lips. This increase of tender attentions of which Octave was quite well aware, and, in spite of himself, extremely sensible, often made keen and poignant a grief which he believed himself to have overcome.

He pictured to himself what those caresses would have been coming from a person who really loved him, coining from Armance as, on her own admission, in the fatal letter to Méry, she had still been two months since. "And my want of friendliness and gaiety has been able to kill her love," said Octave bitterly to himself. "Alas! It was the art of making myself welcome in society that I ought to have studied instead of abandoning myself to all those useless sciences! What good have they done me? What good have I had from my success with Madame d'Aumale? She would have loved me had I wished it. I was not made to please those whom I respect. Evidently a wretched shyness makes me sad, wanting in friendliness, just when I am passionately anxious to please.

"Armance has always alarmed me. I have never approached her without feeling that I was appearing before the ruler of my destiny. I ought to have derived from my experience, and from what I could see going on round about me, a more accurate idea of the effect produced by a pleasant man who seeks to interest a girl of twenty. . . .

"But all that is useless now," said Octave, breaking off with a melancholy sigh: "my life is ended. Vixi et quem, dederat fortuna sortem peregi."

[When dying, abandoned by Aeneas, Dido exclaims: "I have lived and have run the course which fortune appointed for me." [Octave shows a certain

indifference here to the laws of prosody. Virgil's line (Aeneid IV, 653), runs: Vixi et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi. — C. K. S. M.]

In certain moments of sombre humour, Octave went so far as to interpret Armance's tender manner, so little in keeping with the extreme reserve which was so natural to her, as the performance of a disagreeable duty which she had set herself. Nothing then could be comparable to his rudeness, which really had almost the appearance of insanity.

Less wretched at other moments, he allowed himself to be touched by the seductive grace of this girl who was to be his bride. It would indeed have been difficult to imagine anything more touching or more noble than the caressing ways of a girl who was ordinarily so reserved, doing violence to the habits of a lifetime in the attempt to restore a little calm to the man whom she loved. She believed him to be the victim of remorse and yet felt a violent passion for him. Now that the main occupation of Armance's life was no longer to conceal her love and to reproach herself for it, Octave had become dearer to her than ever.

One day, on a walk in the direction of the woods of Ecouen, carried away herself by the tender words which she was venturing to utter, Armance went so far as to say to him, and at the moment she meant what she was saying: "I sometimes think of committing a crime equal to yours so as to deserve that you shall no longer fear me." Octave, charmed by the accents of true passion, and understanding all that was in her mind, stopped short to gaze fixedly at her, and in another moment might have given her the letter containing his confession, the fragments of which he still carried on his person. As he thrust his hand into the pocket of his coat, he felt the finer paper of the false letter addressed to Méry de Tersan, and his good intention froze.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

If he be turn’d to earth, let me but give him one hearty kiss,

and you shall put us both into one coffin.

WEBSTER.

[From Vittoria Corombona, Act IV. Cornelia finds her son Marcello killed by his brother Flamineo. — C. K. S. M.]

Octave was involved in endless conciliations of important relatives whom he knew to disapprove strongly of his marriage. In ordinary circumstances, nothing would have annoyed him more. He would have come away wretched and almost disgusted with his prospective happiness from the mansions of his illustrious kinsfolk. Greatly to his surprise he found, as he performed these duties, that nothing caused him any annoyance; because nothing now interested him any more. He was dead to the world.

Since the revelation of Armance’s fickleness, men were for him creatures of an alien species. Nothing had power to move him, neither the misfortunes of virtue nor the prosperity of crime. A secret voice said to him: these wretches are less wretched than you.

Octave carried through with admirable indifference all the idiotic formalities that modern civilisation has piled up to mar a happy day. The marriage was celebrated.

Taking advantage of what is now becoming an established custom, Octave set off at once with Armance for the domain of Malivert, situated in Dauphiné; and in the end took her to Marseilles. There he informed her that he had made a vow to go to Greece, where he would shew that, notwithstanding his distaste for military ways, he knew how to wield a sword. Armance had been so happy since her marriage that she consented

without undue regret to this temporary separation. Octave himself, being unable to conceal from himself Armance's happiness, was guilty of what was in his eyes the very great weakness of postponing his departure for a week, which he spent in visiting with her the Holy Balm, the Château Borelli and other places in the neighbourhood of Marseilles. He was greatly touched by the happiness of his young bride. "She is playing a part," he said to himself, "her letter to Méry is a clear proof of it; but she plays it so well!" He underwent moments of self-deception when Armance's perfect felicity succeeded in making him happy. "What other woman in the world," Octave asked himself, "even by the most sincere sentiments, could give me such happiness?"

At length it was time for them to part; once on board the ship, Octave paid dearly for his moments of self-deception. For some days he could no longer summon up courage to die. "I should be the lowest of mankind," he said to himself, "and a coward in my own eyes, if after hearing my sentence uttered by the wise Dolier, I do not speedily give Armance back her freedom. I lose little by departing from this life," he added with a sigh; "if Armance plays the lover so gracefully, it is merely a reminiscence, she is recalling what she felt for me in the past. Before long I should have begun to bore her. She respects me, no doubt, but has no longer any passionate feeling for me, and my death will distress her without plunging her in despair." This painful certainty succeeded in making Octave forget the heavenly beauty of an Armance intoxicated with love, and swooning in his arms on the eve of his departure. He regained courage, and from the third day at sea, with his courage there reappeared tranquillity. The vessel happened to be passing the Island of Corsica. The memory of a great man who had died so pitiably occurred vividly to Octave and began to restore his firmness of purpose. As he thought of him incessantly, he almost had him as a witness to his conduct. He feigned a mortal malady. Fortunately, the only medical officer that they had on board was an old ship's carpenter who claimed to understand fever, and he was the first to be taken in by Octave's alarming state and by his ravings. By dint of playing his part for a few moments now and again, Octave saw at the end of a week that they despaired of his recovery. He sent for the captain in what was called one of his lucid intervals, and dictated his will, which was witnessed by the nine persons composing the crew.

Octave had taken care to deposit a similar will with a lawyer at Marseilles. He bequeathed everything that was at his disposal to his wife, on the strange condition that she should remarry within twenty months of his death. If Madame Octave de Malivert did not think fit to comply with this condition, he begged his mother to accept his fortune.

Having signed his testament in the presence of the entire crew, Octave sank into a state of extreme weakness and asked for the prayers for the dying, which several Italian sailors repeated by his bedside. He wrote to Armance, and enclosed in his letter the other which he had had the courage to write to her from a café in Paris, and the letter to her friend Méry de Tersan which he had intercepted in the tub of the orange tree. Never had Octave so fallen under the spell of the most tender love as at this supreme moment. Except for the nature of his death, he gave himself the happiness of telling Armance everything. Octave continued to languish for more than a week, every day he gave himself the fresh pleasure of writing to his beloved. He entrusted his letters to various sailors, who promised him that they would convey them in person to his lawyer at Marseilles.

A ship's boy, from the crow's nest, cried: "Land!" It was the shores of Greece and the mountains of the Morea that had come into sight on the horizon. A fresh breeze bore the vessel rapidly on. The name of Greece revived Octave's courage: "I salute thee," he murmured, "O land of heroes!" And at midnight, on the third of March, as the moon was rising behind Mount Kalos, a mixture of opium and digitalis prepared by himself delivered Octave peacefully from a life which had been so agitated. At break of day, they found him lying motionless on the bridge, leaning against a coil of rope. A smile was on his lips, and his rare beauty impressed even the sailors who gave him burial. The manner of his death was never suspected in France save by Armance alone. Shortly afterwards, the Marquis de Malivert having died, Armance and Madame de Malivert took the veil in the same convent.

THE RED AND THE BLACK

A CHRONICLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

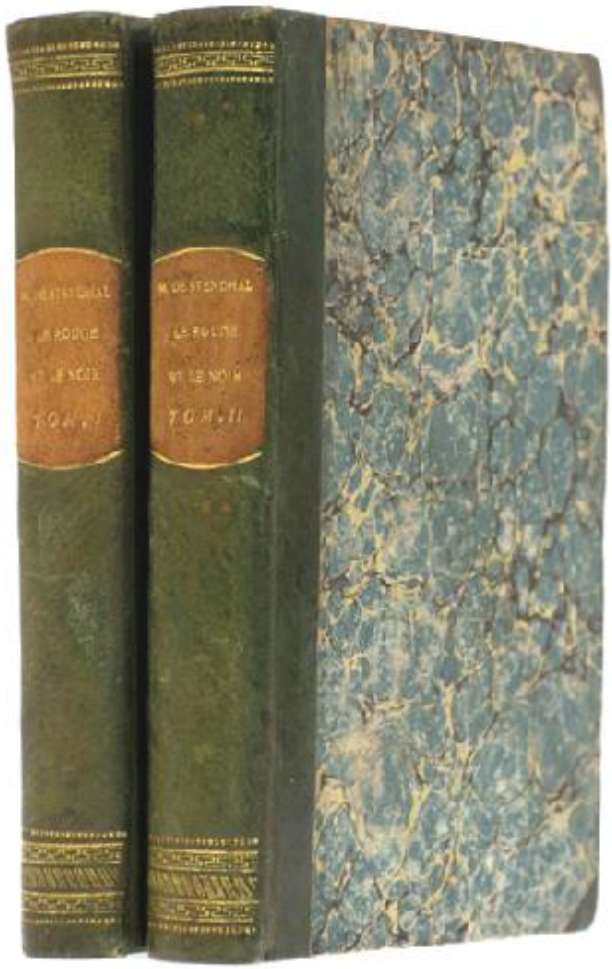
Published in 1830, Le Rouge et le Noir is a historical psychological novel that chronicles the attempts of a provincial young man to rise socially beyond his modest upbringing through a combination of talent, hard work and treachery. The novel's subtitle A Chronicle of the Nineteenth Century underlines the work's secondary purpose as an analytical satire of the French social order under the Bourbon Restoration, as well as a psychological portrait of the romantic protagonist, Julien Sorel.

The novel is a Bildungsroman work, charting the moral growth of the protagonist, from youth to adulthood. Intelligent and ambitious, Julien Sorel comes from a poor family and often fails to understand the ways of the world he sets out to conquer. He harbours many romantic illusions, but finds himself a pawn in the political machinations of the ruthless and influential people surrounding him. The adventures of the hero satirise early nineteenth century French society, especially the hypocrisy and materialism of the aristocracy and members of the Roman Catholic Church, foretelling the coming radical changes that would depose them from their position in society.

The Red and the Black occurs in the latter years of the Bourbon Restoration (1814–30) and the days of the 1830 July Revolution that established the Kingdom of the French (1830–48). Julien Sorel's worldly ambitions are

motivated by the emotional tensions between his idealistic Republicanism, as demonstrated by his nostalgic allegiance to Napoleon, as well as the realistic politics of counter-revolutionary conspiracy, by Jesuit-supported legitimists, notably the Marquis de la Mole, whom Julien serves, for personal gain.

The critic André Gide argued that The Red and the Black was a novel ahead of its time, due to Stendhal's literary technique of describing the inner psychologies of his characters. As feelings, thoughts and interior monologues are frequently present in the text, which was written at a time when most authors relied on using dialogue and omniscient narrators to relate this information to the reader, Stendhal is now regarded by many as the creator of the psychological novel.



The first edition

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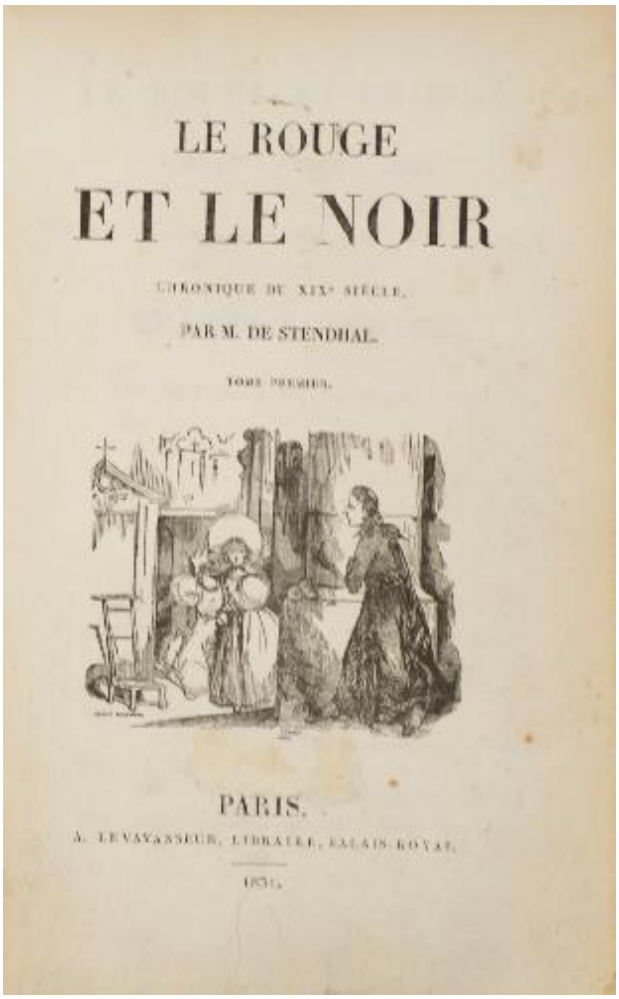
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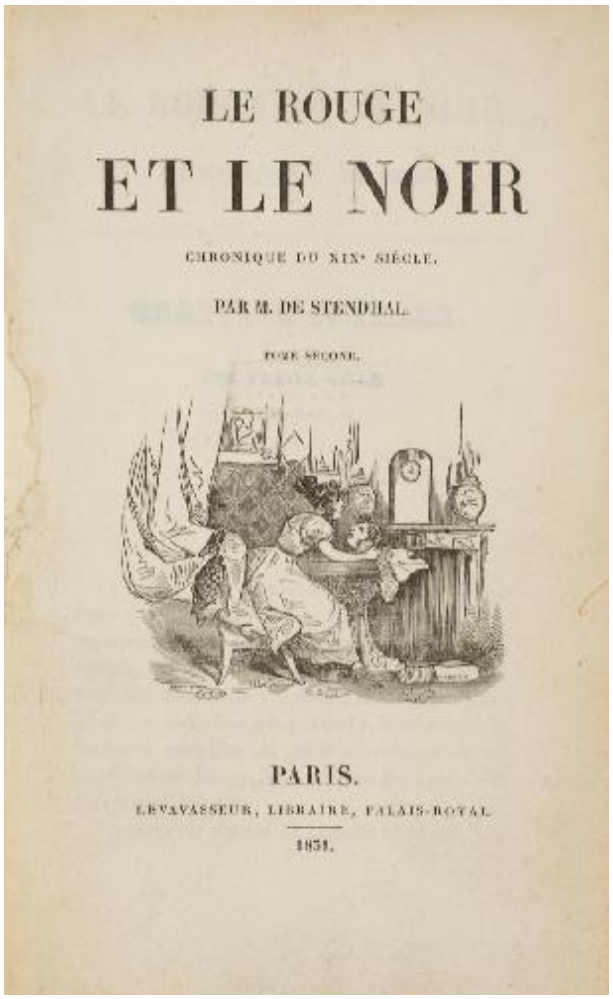
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The title page of the second volume

BOOK ONE

The truth, the harsh truth

DANTON

Chapter 1

A Small Town

Put thousands together

Less bad,

But the cage less gay.

HOBBES

The small town of Verrieres may be regarded as one of the most attractive in the Franche–Comte. Its white houses with their high pitched roofs of red tiles are spread over the slope of a hill, the slightest contours of which are indicated by clumps of sturdy chestnuts. The Doubs runs some hundreds of feet below its fortifications, built in times past by the Spaniards, and now in ruins.

Verrieres is sheltered on the north by a high mountain, a spur of the Jura. The jagged peaks of the Verra put on a mantle of snow in the first cold days of October. A torrent which comes tearing down from the mountain passes through Verrieres before emptying its waters into the Doubs, and supplies power to a great number of sawmills; this is an extremely simple industry, and procures a certain degree of comfort for the majority of the inhabitants, who are of the peasant rather than of the burgess class. It is not, however, the sawmills that have made this little town rich. It is to the manufacture of printed calicoes, known as Mulhouse stuffs, that it owes the general prosperity which, since the fall of Napoleon, has led to the refacing of almost all the houses in Verrieres.

No sooner has one entered the town than one is startled by the din of a noisy machine of terrifying aspect. A score of weighty hammers, falling with a clang which makes the pavement tremble, are raised aloft by a wheel which the water of the torrent sets in motion. Each of these hammers turns out, daily, I cannot say how many thousands of nails. A bevy of fresh, pretty girls subject to the blows of these enormous hammers, the little scraps of iron which are rapidly transformed into nails. This work, so rough to the outward eye, is one of the industries that most astonish the traveller who ventures for the first time among the mountains that divide France from Switzerland. If, on entering Verrieres, the traveller inquires to whom belongs that fine nail factory which deafens everybody who passes up the main street, he will be told in a drawling accent: 'Eh! It belongs to the Mayor.'

Provided the traveller halts for a few moments in this main street of Verrieres, which runs from the bank of the Doubs nearly to the summit of the hill, it is a hundred to one that he will see a tall man appear, with a busy, important air.

At the sight of him every hat is quickly raised. His hair is turning grey, and he is dressed in grey. He is a Companion of several Orders, has a high forehead, an aquiline nose, and on the whole his face is not wanting in a certain regularity: indeed, the first impression formed of it may be that it combines with the dignity of a village mayor that sort of charm which may still be found in a man of forty-eight or fifty. But soon the visitor from Paris is annoyed by a certain air of self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency mingled with a suggestion of limitations and want of originality. One feels, finally, that this man's talent is confined to securing the exact payment of whatever is owed to him and to postponing payment till the last possible moment when he is the debtor.

Such is the Mayor of Verrieres, M. de Renal. Crossing the street with a solemn step, he enters the town hall and passes from the visitor's sight. But, a hundred yards higher up, if the visitor continues his stroll, he will notice a house of quite imposing appearance, and, through the gaps in an iron railing belonging to the house, some splendid gardens. Beyond, there is a line of horizon formed by the hills of Burgundy, which seem to have been created on purpose to delight the eye. This view makes the visitor forget the

pestilential atmosphere of small financial interests which was beginning to stifle him.

He is told that this house belongs to M. de Renal. It is to the profits that he has made from his great nail factory that the Mayor of Verrieres is indebted for this fine freestone house which he has just finished building. His family, they say, is Spanish, old, and was or claims to have been established in the country long before Louis XIV conquered it.

Since 1815 he has blushed at his connection with industry: 1815 made him Mayor of Verrieres. The retaining walls that support the various sections of this splendid garden, which, in a succession of terraces, runs down to the Doubs, are also a reward of M. de Renal's ability as a dealer in iron.

You must not for a moment expect to find in France those picturesque gardens which enclose the manufacturing towns of Germany; Leipsic, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, and the rest. In the Franche–Comte, the more walls a man builds, the more he makes his property bristle with stones piled one above another, the greater title he acquires to the respect of his neighbours. M. de Renal's gardens, honeycombed with walls, are still further admired because he bought, for their weight in gold, certain minute scraps of ground which they cover. For instance that sawmill whose curious position on the bank of the Doubs struck you as you entered Verrieres, and on which you noticed the name Sorel, inscribed in huge letters on a board which overtops the roof, occupied, six years ago, the ground on which at this moment they are building the wall of the fourth terrace of M. de Renal's gardens.

For all his pride, the Mayor was obliged to make many overtures to old Sorel, a dour and obstinate peasant; he was obliged to pay him in fine golden louis before he would consent to remove his mill elsewhere. As for the public lade which supplied power to the saw, M. de Renal, thanks to the influence he wielded in Paris, obtained leave to divert it. This favour was conferred upon him after the 182 — elections.

He gave Sorel four acres in exchange for one, five hundred yards lower down by the bank of the Doubs. And, albeit this site was a great deal more advantageous for his trade in planks of firwood, Pere Sorel, as they have begun to call him now that he is rich, contrived to screw out of the

impatience and landowning mania which animated his neighbour a sum of 6,000 francs.

It is true that this arrangement was adversely criticised by the local wiseacres. On one occasion, it was a Sunday, four years later, M. de Renal, as he walked home from church in his mayoral attire, saw at a distance old Sorel, supported by his three sons, watching him with a smile. That smile cast a destroying ray of light into the Mayor's soul; ever since then he has been thinking that he might have brought about the exchange at less cost to himself.

To win popular esteem at Verrieres, the essential thing is not to adopt (while still building plenty of walls) any plan of construction brought from Italy by those masons who in spring pass through the gorges of the Jura on their way to Paris. Such an innovation would earn the rash builder an undying reputation fot wrong-headedness, and he would be lost forever among the sober and moderate folk who create reputations in the Franche–Comte.

As a matter of fact, these sober folk wield there the most irritating form of despotism; it is owing to that vile word that residence in small towns is intolerable to anyone who has lived in that great republic which we call Paris. The tyranny of public opinion (and what an opinion!) is as fatuous in the small towns of France as it is in the United States of America.

Chapter 2

A Mayor

Prestige! Sir, is it nothing? To be revered by fools, gaped at by children, envied by the rich and scorned by the wise.

BARNAVE

Fortunately for M. de Renal's reputation as an administrator, a huge retaining wall was required for the public avenue which skirts the hillside a hundred feet above the bed of the Doubs. To this admirable position it is indebted for one of the most picturesque views in France. But, every spring, torrents of rainwater made channels across the avenue, carved deep gullies in it and left it impassable. This nuisance, which affected everybody alike, placed M. de Renal under the fortunate obligation to immortalise his administration by a wall twenty feet in height and seventy or eighty yards long.

The parapet of this wall, to secure which M. de Renal was obliged to make three journeys to Paris, for the Minister of the Interior before last had sworn a deadly enmity to the Verrieres avenue; the parapet of this wall now rises four feet above the ground. And, as though to defy all Ministers past and present, it is being finished off at this moment with slabs of dressed stone.

How often, my thoughts straying back to the ball-rooms of Paris, which I had forsaken overnight, my elbows leaning upon those great blocks of stone of a fine grey with a shade of blue in it, have I swept with my gaze the vale of the Doubs! Over there, on the left bank, are five or six winding valleys, along the folds of which the eye can make out quite plainly a number of little streams. After leaping from rock to rock, they may be seen falling into the

Doubs. The sun is extremely hot in these mountains; when it is directly overhead, the traveller's rest is sheltered on this terrace by a row of magnificent planes. Their rapid growth, and handsome foliage of a bluish tint are due to the artificial soil with which the Mayor has filled in the space behind his immense retaining wall, for, despite the opposition of the town council, he has widened the avenue by more than six feet (although he is an Ultra and I myself a Liberal, I give him credit for it), that is why, in his opinion and in that of M. Valenod, the fortunate governor of the Verrieres poorhouse, this terrace is worthy to be compared with that of Saint–Germain-en-Laye.

For my part, I have only one fault to find with the Cours de la Fidelite; one reads this, its official title, in fifteen or twenty places, on marble slabs which have won M. de Renal yet another Cross; what I should be inclined to condemn in the Cours de la Fidelite is the barbarous manner in which the authorities keep these sturdy plane trees trimmed and pollarded. Instead of suggesting, with their low, rounded, flattened heads, the commonest of kitchen garden vegetables, they would like nothing better than to assume those magnificent forms which one sees them wear in England. But the Mayor's will is despotic, and twice a year every tree belonging to the commune is pitilessly lopped. The Liberals of the place maintain, but they exaggerate, that the hand of the official gardener has grown much more severe since the Reverend Vicar Maslon formed the habit of appropriating the clippings.

This young cleric was sent from Besancon, some years ago, to keep an eye upon the abbe Chelan and certain parish priests of the district. An old Surgeon–Major of the Army of Italy, in retirement at Verrieres, who in his time had been simultaneously, according to the Mayor, a Jacobin and a Bonapartist, actually ventured one day to complain to him of the periodical mutilation of these fine trees.

'I like shade,' replied M. de Renal with the touch of arrogance appropriate when one is addressing a surgeon, a Member of the Legion of Honour; 'I like shade, I have my trees cut so as to give shade, and I do not consider that a tree is made for any other purpose, unless, like the useful walnut, it yields a return.'

There you have the great phrase that decides everything at Verrieres: YIELD A RETURN; it by itself represents the habitual thought of more than three fourths of the inhabitants.

Yielding a return is the consideration that settles everything in this little town which seemed to you, just now, so attractive. The stranger arriving there, beguiled by the beauty of the cool, deep valleys on every side, imagines at first that the inhabitants are influenced by the idea of beauty; they are always talking about the beauty of their scenery: no one can deny that they make a great to-do about it; but this is because it attracts a certain number of visitors whose money goes to enrich the innkeepers, and thus, through the channel of the rate-collector, yields a return to the town.

It was a fine day in autumn and M. de Renal was strolling along the Cours de la Fidelite, his lady on his arm. While she listened to her husband, who was speaking with an air of gravity, Madame de Renal's eye was anxiously following the movements of three little boys. The eldest, who might be about eleven, was continually running to the parapet as though about to climb on top. A gentle voice then uttered the name Adolphe, and the child abandoned his ambitious project. Madame de Renal looked like a woman of thirty, but was still extremely pretty.

'He may live to rue the day, that fine gentleman from Paris,' M. de Renal was saying in a tone of annoyance, his cheek paler even than was its wont. 'I myself am not entirely without friends at Court. . . .'

But albeit I mean to speak to you of provincial life for two hundred pages, I shall not be so barbarous as to inflict upon you the tedium and all the clever turns of a provincial dialogue.

This fine gentleman from Paris, so odious to the Mayor of Verrieres, was none other than M. Appert,† who, a couple of days earlier, had contrived to make his way not only into the prison and the poorhouse of Verrieres, but also into the hospital, administered gratuitously by the Mayor and the principal landowners of the neighbourhood.

† A contemporary philanthropist and prison visitor.]

‘But,’ Madame de Renal put in timidly, ‘what harm can this gentleman from Paris do you, since you provide for the welfare of the poor with the most scrupulous honesty?’

‘He has only come to cast blame, and then he’ll go back and have articles put in the Liberal papers.’

‘You never read them, my dear.’

‘But people tell us about those Jacobin articles; all that distracts us, and hinders us from doing good.† As for me, I shall never forgive the cure.’

† Author’s footnote: authentic]

Chapter 3

The Bread of the Poor

A virtuous priest who does not involve himself in intrigue is a blessing for the village.

FLEURY

It should be explained that the cure of Verrieres, an old man of eighty, but blessed by the keen air of his mountains with an iron character and strength, had the right to visit at any hour of the day the prison, the hospital, and even the poorhouse. It was at six o'clock in the morning precisely that M. Appert, who was armed with an introduction to the cure from Paris, had had the good sense to arrive in an inquisitive little town. He had gone at once to the presbytery.

As he read the letter addressed to him by M. le Marquis de La Mole, a Peer of France, and the wealthiest landowner in the province, the cure Chelan sat lost in thought.

'I am old and liked here,' he murmured to himself at length, 'they would never dare!' Turning at once to the gentleman from Paris, with eyes in which, despite his great age, there burned that sacred fire which betokens the pleasure of performing a fine action which is slightly dangerous:

'Come with me, Sir, and, in the presence of the gaoler and especially of the superintendents of the poorhouse, be so good as not to express any opinion of the things we shall see.' M. Appert realised that he had to deal with a man of feeling; he accompanied the venerable cure, visited the prison, the

hospital, the poorhouse, asked many questions and, notwithstanding strange answers, did not allow himself to utter the least word of reproach.

This visit lasted for some hours. The cure invited M. Appert to dine with him, but was told that his guest had some letters to write: he did not wish to compromise his kind friend any further. About three o'clock, the gentlemen went back to complete their inspection of the poorhouse, after which they returned to the prison. There they found the gaoler standing in the doorway; a giant six feet tall, with bandy legs; terror had made his mean face hideous.

'Ah, Sir,' he said to the cure, on catching sight of him, 'is not this gentleman, that I see with you, M. Appert?'

'What if he is?' said the cure.

'Because yesterday I received the most definite instructions, which the Prefect sent down by a gendarme who had to gallop all night long, not to allow M. Appert into the prison.'

'I declare to you, M. Noiroud,' said the cure, 'that this visitor, who is in my company, is M. Appert. Do you admit that I have the right to enter the prison at any hour of the day or night, bringing with me whom I please?'

'Yes, M. le cure,' the gaoler murmured in a subdued tone, lowering his head like a bulldog brought reluctantly to obedience by fear of the stick. 'Only, M. le cure, I have a wife and children, if I am reported I shall be dismissed; I have only my place here to live on.'

'I too should be very sorry to lose mine,' replied the worthy cure, in a voice swayed by ever increasing emotion.

'What a difference!' the gaoler answered promptly; 'why you, M. le cure, we know that you have an income of 800 livres, a fine place in the sun . . .'

Such are the events which, commented upon, exaggerated in twenty different ways, had been arousing for the last two days all the evil passions of the little town of Verrieres. At that moment they were serving as text for the little discussion which M. de Renal was having with his wife. That morning, accompanied by M. Valenod, the governor of the poorhouse, he had gone to

the cure's house, to inform him of their extreme displeasure. M. Chelan was under no one's protection; he felt the full force of their words.

'Well, gentlemen, I shall be the third parish priest, eighty years of age, to be deprived of his living in this district. I have been here for six and fifty years; I have christened almost all the inhabitants of the town, which was no more than a village when I came. Every day I marry young couples whose grandparents I married long ago. Verrieres is my family; but I said to myself, when I saw the stranger: "This man, who has come from Paris, may indeed be a Liberal, there are far too many of them; but what harm can he do to our poor people and our prisoners?"'

The reproaches of M. de Renal, and above all those of M. Valenod, the governor of the poorhouse, becoming more and more bitter:

'Very well, gentlemen, have me deprived,' the old cure had cried, in a quavering voice. 'I shall live in the town all the same. You all know that forty-eight years ago I inherited a piece of land which brings me 800 livres; I shall live on that income. I save nothing out of my stipend, gentlemen, and that may be why I am less alarmed when people speak of taking it from me.'

M. de Renal lived on excellent terms with his wife; but not knowing what answer to make to the question, which she timidly repeated: 'What harm can this gentleman from Paris do to the prisoners?' he was just about to lose his temper altogether when she uttered a cry. Her second son had climbed upon the parapet of the wall of the terrace, and was running along it, though this wall rose more than twenty feet from the vineyard beneath. The fear of alarming her son and so making him fall restrained Madame de Renal from calling him. Finally the child, who was laughing at his own prowess, turned to look at his mother, noticed how pale she was, sprang down upon the avenue and ran to join her. He was well scolded.

This little incident changed the course of the conversation.

'I am quite determined to engage young Sorel, the sawyer's son,' said M. de Renal; 'he will look after the children, who are beginning to be too much of a handful for us. He is a young priest or thereabouts, a good Latin scholar, and will bring the children on; for he has a strong character, the cure says. I

shall give him 300 francs and his board. I had some doubts as to his morals; for he was the Benjamin of that old surgeon, the Member of the Legion of Honour who on pretence of being their cousin came to live with the Sorels. He might quite well have been nothing better than a secret agent of the Liberals; he said that our mountain air was good for his asthma; but that has never been proved. He had served in all Buonaparte's campaigns in Italy, and they even say that he voted against the Empire in his day. This Liberal taught young Sorel Latin, and left him all the pile of books he brought here with him. Not that I should ever have dreamed of having the carpenter's son with my children; but the cure, only the day before the scene which has made a permanent breach between us, told me that this Sorel has been studying theology for the last three years, with the idea of entering the Seminary; so he is not a Liberal, and he is a Latin scholar.

'This arrangement suits me in more ways than one,' M. de Renal went on, looking at his wife with an air of diplomacy; 'Valenod is tremendously proud of the two fine Norman horses he has just bought for his calash. But he has not got a tutor for his children.'

'He is quite capable of taking this one from us.'

'Then you approve of my plan?' said M. de Renal, thanking his wife, with a smile, for the excellent idea that had just occurred to her. 'There, that's settled.'

'Oh, good gracious, my dear, how quickly you make up your mind!'

'That is because I have a strong character, as the cure has had occasion to see. Let us make no pretence about it, we are surrounded by Liberals here. All these cloth merchants are jealous of me, I am certain of it; two or three of them are growing rich; very well, I wish them to see M. de Renal's children go by, out walking in the care of their tutor. It will make an impression. My grandfather used often to tell us that in his young days he had had a tutor. It's a hundred crowns he's going to cost me, but that will have to be reckoned as a necessary expense to keep up our position.'

This sudden decision plunged Madame de Renal deep in thought. She was a tall, well-made woman, who had been the beauty of the place, as the saying

is in this mountain district. She had a certain air of simplicity and bore herself like a girl; in the eyes of a Parisian, that artless grace, full of innocence and vivacity, might even have suggested ideas of a mildly passionate nature. Had she had wind of this kind of success, Madame de Renal would have been thoroughly ashamed of it. No trace either of coquetry or of affectation had ever appeared in her nature. M. Valenod, the wealthy governor of the poorhouse, was supposed to have paid his court to her, but without success, a failure which had given a marked distinction to her virtue; for this M. Valenod, a tall young man, strongly built, with a vivid complexion and bushy black whiskers, was one of those coarse, brazen, noisy creatures who in the provinces are called fine men.

Madame de Renal, being extremely shy and liable to be swayed by her moods, was offended chiefly by the restless movements and loud voice of M. Valenod. The distaste that she felt for what at Verrieres goes by the name of gaiety had won her the reputation of being extremely proud of her birth. She never gave it a thought, but had been greatly pleased to see the inhabitants of Verrieres come less frequently to her house. We shall not attempt to conceal the fact that she was reckoned a fool in the eyes of their ladies, because, without any regard for her husband's interests, she let slip the most promising opportunities of procuring fine hats from Paris or Besancon. Provided that she was left alone to stroll in her fine garden, she never made any complaint.

She was a simple soul, who had never risen even to the point of criticising her husband, and admitting that he bored her. She supposed, without telling herself so, that between husband and wife there could be no more tender relations. She was especially fond of M. de Renal when he spoke to her of his plans for their children, one of whom he intended to place in the army, the second on the bench, and the third in the church. In short, she found M. de Renal a great deal less boring than any of the other men of her acquaintance.

This wifely opinion was justified. The Mayor of Verrieres owed his reputation for wit, and better still for good tone, to half a dozen pleasantries which he had inherited from an uncle. This old Captain de Renal had served before the Revolution in the Duke of Orleans's regiment of infantry, and, when he went to Paris, had had the right of entry into that Prince's drawing-

rooms. He had there seen Madame de Montesson, the famous Madame de Genlis, M. Ducrest, the ‘inventor’ of the Palais–Royal. These personages figured all too frequently in M. de Renal’s stories. But by degrees these memories of things that it required so much delicacy to relate had become a burden to him, and for some time now it was only on solemn occasions that he would repeat his anecdotes of the House of Orleans. As he was in other respects most refined, except when the talk ran on money, he was regarded, and rightly, as the most aristocratic personage in Verrieres.

Chapter 4

Father and Son

E sara mia colpa, Se cosi e?

MACHIAVELLI

‘My wife certainly has a head on her shoulders!’ the Mayor of Verrieres remarked to himself the following morning at six o’clock, as he made his way down to Pere Sorel’s sawmill. ‘Although I said so to her, to maintain my own superiority, it had never occurred to me that if I do not take this little priest Sorel, who, they tell me, knows his Latin like an angel, the governor of the poorhouse, that restless spirit, might very well have the same idea, and snatch him from me, I can hear the tone of conceit with which he would speak of his children’s tutor! . . . This tutor, once I’ve secured him, will he wear a cassock?’

M. de Renal was absorbed in this question when he saw in the distance a peasant, a man of nearly six feet in height, who, by the first dawning light, seemed to be busily occupied in measuring pieces of timber lying by the side of the Doubs, upon the towpath. The peasant did not appear any too well pleased to see the Mayor coming towards him; for his pieces of wood were blocking the path, and had been laid there in contravention of the law.

Pere Sorel, for it was he, was greatly surprised and even more pleased by the singular offer which M. de Renal made him with regard to his son Julien. He listened to it nevertheless with that air of grudging-melancholy and lack of interest which the shrewd inhabitants of those mountains know so well how to assume. Slaves in the days of Spanish rule, they still retain this facial characteristic of the Egyptian fellahin.

Sorel's reply was at first nothing more than a long-winded recital of all the formal terms of respect which he knew by heart. While he was repeating these vain words, with an awkward smile which enhanced the air of falsehood and almost of rascality natural to his countenance, the old peasant's active mind was seeking to discover what reason could be inducing so important a personage to take his scapegrace of a son into his establishment. He was thoroughly dissatisfied with Julien, and it was for Julien that M. de Renal was offering him the astounding wage of 300 francs annually, in addition to his food and even his clothing. This last condition, which Pere Sorel had had the intelligence to advance on the spur of the moment, had been granted with equal readiness by M. de Renal.

This demand impressed the Mayor. 'Since Sorel is not delighted and overwhelmed by my proposal, as he ought naturally to be, it is clear,' he said to himself, 'that overtures have been made to him from another quarter; and from whom can they have come, except from Valenod?' It was in vain that M. de Renal urged Sorel to conclude the bargain there and then: the astute old peasant met him with an obstinate refusal; he wished, he said, to consult his son, as though, in the country, a rich father ever consulted a penniless son, except for form's sake.

A sawmill consists of a shed by the side of a stream. The roof is held up by rafters supported on four stout wooden pillars. Nine or ten feet from the ground, in the middle of the shed, one sees a saw which moves up and down, while an extremely simple mechanism thrusts forward against this saw a piece of wood. This is a wheel set in motion by the mill lade which drives both parts of the machine; that of the saw which moves up and down, and the other which pushes the piece of wood gently towards the saw, which slices it into planks.

As he approached his mill, Pere Sorel called Julien in his stentorian voice; there was no answer. He saw only his two elder sons, young giants who, armed with heavy axes, were squaring the trunks of fir which they would afterwards carry to the saw. They were completely engrossed in keeping exactly to the black line traced on the piece of wood, from which each blow of the axe sent huge chips flying. They did not hear their father's voice. He made his way to the shed; as he entered it, he looked in vain for Julien in the place where he ought to have been standing, beside the saw. He caught sight

of him five or six feet higher up, sitting astride upon one of the beams of the roof. Instead of paying careful attention to the action of the machinery, Julien was reading a book. Nothing could have been less to old Sorel's liking; he might perhaps have forgiven Julien his slender build, little adapted to hard work, and so different from that of his elder brothers; but this passion for reading he detested: he himself was unable to read.

It was in vain that he called Julien two or three times. The attention the young man was paying to his book, far more than the noise of the saw, prevented him from hearing his father's terrifying voice. Finally, despite his years, the father sprang nimbly upon the trunk that was being cut by the saw, and from there on to the cross beam that held up the roof. A violent blow sent flying into the mill lade the book that Julien was holding; a second blow no less violent, aimed at his head, in the form of a box on the ear, made him lose his balance. He was about to fall from a height of twelve or fifteen feet, among the moving machinery, which would have crushed him, but his father caught him with his left hand as he fell.

'Well, idler! So you keep on reading your cursed books, when you ought to be watching the saw? Read them in the evening, when you go and waste your time with the cure.'

Julien, although stunned by the force of the blow, and bleeding profusely, went to take up his proper station beside the saw. There were tears in his eyes, due not so much to his bodily pain as to the loss of his book, which he adored.

'Come down, animal, till I speak to you.' The noise of the machine again prevented Julien from hearing this order. His father who had stepped down not wishing to take the trouble to climb up again on to the machine, went to find a long pole used for knocking down walnuts, and struck him on the shoulder with it. No sooner had Julien reached the ground than old Sorel, thrusting him on brutally from behind, drove him towards the house. 'Heaven knows what he's going to do to me!' thought the young man. As he passed it, he looked sadly at the mill lade into which his book had fallen; it was the one that he valued most of all, the Memorial de Sainte–Helene.

His cheeks were flushed, his eyes downcast. He was a slim youth of eighteen or nineteen, weak in appearance, with irregular but delicate features and an aquiline nose. His large dark eyes, which, in moments of calm, suggested a reflective, fiery spirit, were animated at this instant with an expression of the most ferocious hatred. Hair of a dark chestnut, growing very low, gave him a narrow brow, and in moments of anger a wicked air. Among the innumerable varieties of the human countenance, there is perhaps none that is more strikingly characteristic. A slim and shapely figure betokened suppleness rather than strength. In his childhood, his extremely pensive air and marked pallor had given his father the idea that he would not live, or would live only to be a burden upon his family. An object of contempt to the rest of the household, he hated his brothers and father; in the games on Sundays, on the public square, he was invariably beaten.

It was only during the last year that his good looks had begun to win him a few supporters among the girls. Universally despised, as a feeble creature, Julien had adored that old Surgeon–Major who one day ventured to speak to the Mayor on the subject of the plane trees.

This surgeon used now and then to pay old Sorel a day's wage for his son, and taught him Latin and history, that is to say all the history that he knew, that of the 1796 campaign in Italy. On his death, he had bequeathed to him his Cross of the Legion of Honour, the arrears of his pension, and thirty or forty volumes, the most precious of which had just taken a plunge into the public lade, diverted by the Mayor's influence.

As soon as he was inside the house, Julien felt his shoulder gripped by his father's strong hand; he trembled, expecting to receive a shower of blows.

'Answer me without lying,' the old peasant's harsh voice shouted in his ear, while the hand spun him round as a child's hand spins a lead soldier. Julien's great dark eyes, filled with tears, found themselves starting into the little grey eyes of the old peasant, who looked as though he sought to penetrate to the depths of his son's heart.

Chapter 5

Driving a Bargain

Cunctando restituit rem.

ENNIUS

‘Answer me, without lying, if you can, you miserable bookworm; how do you come to know Madame de Renal? When have you spoken to her?’

‘I have never spoken to her,’ replied Julien, ‘I have never seen the lady except in church.’

‘But you must have looked at her, you shameless scoundrel?’

‘Never! You know that in church I see none but God,’ Julien added with a hypocritical air, calculated, to his mind, to ward off further blows.

‘There is something behind this, all the same,’ replied the suspicious peasant, and was silent for a moment; ‘but I shall get nothing out of you, you damned hypocrite. The fact is, I’m going to be rid of you, and my saw will run all the better without you. You have made a friend of the parson or someone, and he’s got you a fine post. Go and pack your traps, and I’ll take you to M. de Renal’s where you’re to be tutor to the children.’

‘What am I to get for that?’

‘Board, clothing and three hundred francs in wages.’

‘I do not wish to be a servant,’

‘Animal, who ever spoke of your being a servant? Would I allow my son to be a servant?’

‘But, with whom shall I have my meals?’

This question left old Sorel at a loss; he felt that if he spoke he might be guilty of some imprudence; he flew into a rage with Julien, upon whom he showered abuse, accusing him of greed, and left him to go and consult his other sons.

Presently Julien saw them, each leaning upon his axe and deliberating together. After watching them for some time, Julien, seeing that he could make out nothing of their discussion, went and took his place on the far side of the saw, so as not to be taken by surprise. He wanted time to consider this sudden announcement which was altering his destiny, but felt himself to be incapable of prudence; his imagination was wholly taken up with forming pictures of what he would see in M. de Renal’s fine house.

‘I must give up all that,’ he said to himself, ‘rather than let myself be brought down to feeding with the servants. My father will try to force me; I would sooner die. I have saved fifteen francs and eight sous, I shall run away tonight; in two days, by keeping to side-roads where I need not fear the police, I can be at Besancon; there I enlist as a soldier, and, if necessary, cross the border into Switzerland. But then, good-bye to everything, good-bye to that fine clerical profession which is a stepping-stone to everything.’

This horror of feeding with the servants was not natural to Julien; he would, in seeking his fortune, have done other things far more disagreeable. He derived this repugnance from Rousseau’s Confessions. It was the one book that helped his imagination to form any idea of the world. The collection of reports of the Grand Army and the Memorial de Sainte–Helene completed his Koran. He would have gone to the stake for those three books. Never did he believe in any other. Remembering a saying of the old Surgeon–Major, he regarded all the other books in the world as liars, written by rogues in order to obtain advancement.

With his fiery nature Julien had one of those astonishing memories so often found in foolish people. To win over the old priest Chelan, upon whom he

saw quite clearly that his own future depended, he had learned by heart the entire New Testament in Latin; he knew also M. de Maistre's book Du Pape, and had as little belief in one as in the other.

As though by a mutual agreement, Sorel and his son avoided speaking to one another for the rest of the day. At dusk, Julien went to the cure for his divinity lesson, but did not think it prudent to say anything to him of the strange proposal that had been made to his father. 'It may be a trap,' he told himself; 'I must pretend to have forgotten about it.'

Early on the following day, M. de Renal sent for old Sorel, who, after keeping him waiting for an hour or two, finally appeared, beginning as he entered the door a hundred excuses interspersed with as many reverences. By dint of giving voice to every sort of objection, Sorel succeeded in gathering that his son was to take his meals with the master and mistress of the house, and on days when they had company in a room by himself with the children. Finding an increasing desire to raise difficulties the more he discerned a genuine anxiety on the Mayor's part, and being moreover filled with distrust and bewilderment, Sorel asked to see the room in which his son was to sleep. It was a large chamber very decently furnished, but the servants were already engaged in carrying into it the beds of the three children.

At this the old peasant began to see daylight; he at once asked with assurance to see the coat which would be given to his son. M. de Renal opened his desk and took out a hundred francs.

'With this money, your son can go to M. Durand, the clothier, and get himself a suit of black.'

'And supposing I take him away from you,' said the peasant, who had completely forgotten the reverential forms of address. 'Will he take this black coat with him?'

'Certainly.'

'Oh, very well!' said Sorel in a drawling tone, 'then there's only one thing for us still to settle: the money you're to give him.'

‘What!’ M. de Renal indignantly exclaimed, ‘we agreed upon that yesterday: I give three hundred francs; I consider that plenty, if not too much.’

‘That was your offer, I do not deny it,’ said old Sorel, speaking even more slowly; then, by a stroke of genius which will astonish only those who do not know the Franc–Comtois peasant, he added, looking M. de Renal steadily in the face: ‘We can do better elsewhere.’

At these words the Mayor was thrown into confusion. He recovered himself, however, and, after an adroit conversation lasting fully two hours, in which not a word was said without a purpose, the peasant’s shrewdness prevailed over that of the rich man, who was not dependent on his for his living. All the innumerable conditions which were to determine Julien’s new existence were finally settled; not only was his salary fixed at four hundred francs, but it was to be paid in advance, on the first day of each month.

‘Very well! I shall let him have thirty-five francs,’ said M. de Renal.

‘To make a round sum, a rich and generous gentleman like our Mayor,’ the peasant insinuated in a coaxing voice, ‘will surely go as far as thirty-six.’

‘All right,’ said M. de Renal, ‘but let us have no more of this.’

For once, anger gave him a tone of resolution. The peasant saw that he could advance no farther. Thereupon M. de Renal began in turn to make headway. He utterly refused to hand over the thirty-six francs for the first month to old Sorel, who was most eager to receive the money on his son’s behalf. It occurred to M. de Renal that he would be obliged to describe to his wife the part he had played throughout this transaction.

‘Let me have back the hundred francs I gave you,’ he said angrily. ‘M. Durand owes me money. I shall go with your son to choose the black cloth.’

After this bold stroke, Sorel prudently retired upon his expressions of respect; they occupied a good quarter of an hour. In the end, seeing that there was certainly nothing more to be gained, he withdrew. His final reverence ended with the words:

‘I shall send my son up to the chateau.’

It was thus that the Mayor's subordinates spoke of his house when they wished to please him.

Returning to his mill, Sorel looked in vain for his son. Doubtful as to what might be in store for him, Julien had left home in the dead of night. He had been anxious to find a safe hiding-place for his books and his Cross of the Legion of Honour. He had removed the whole of his treasures to the house of a young timber-merchant, a friend of his, by the name of Fouque, who lived on the side of the high mountain overlooking Verrieres.

When he reappeared: 'Heaven knows, you damned idler,' his father said to him, 'whether you will ever have enough honour to pay me for the cost of your keep, which I have been advancing to you all these years! Pack up your rubbish, and off with you to the Mayor's.'

Julien, astonished not to receive a thrashing, made haste to set off. But no sooner was he out of sight of his terrible father than he slackened his pace. He decided that it would serve the ends of his hypocrisy to pay a visit to the church.

The idea surprises you? Before arriving at this horrible idea, the soul of the young peasant had had a long way to go.

When he was still a child, the sight of certain dragoons of the 6th, in their long, white cloaks, and helmets adorned with long crests of black horsehair, who were returning from Italy, and whom Julien saw tying their horses to the barred window of his father's house, drove him mad with longing for a military career.

Later on he listened with ecstasy to the accounts of the battles of the Bridge of Lodi, Arcole and Rivoli given him by the old Surgeon–Major. He noticed the burning gaze which the old man directed at his Cross.

But when Julien was fourteen, they began to build a church at Verrieres, one that might be called magnificent for so small a town. There were, in particular, four marble pillars the sight of which impressed Julien; they became famous throughout the countryside, owing to the deadly enmity which they aroused between the Justice of the Peace and the young vicar,

sent down from Besancon, who was understood to be the spy of the Congregation. The Justice of the Peace came within an ace of losing his post, such at least was the common report. Had he not dared to have a difference of opinion with a priest who, almost every fortnight, went to Besancon, where he saw, people said, the Right Reverend Lord Bishop?

In the midst of all this, the Justice of the Peace, the father of a large family, passed a number of sentences which appeared unjust; all of these were directed against such of the inhabitants as read the Constitutionnel. The right party was triumphant. The sums involved amounted, it was true, to no more than four or five francs; but one of these small fines was levied upon a nailsmith, Julien's godfather. In his anger, this man exclaimed: 'What a change! And to think that, for twenty years and more, the Justice was reckoned such an honest man!' The Surgeon–Major, Julien's friend, was dead.

All at once Julien ceased to speak of Napoleon; he announced his intention of becoming a priest, and was constantly to be seen, in his father's sawmill, engaged in learning by heart a Latin Bible which the cure had lent him. The good old man, amazed at his progress, devoted whole evenings to instructing him in divinity. Julien gave utterance in his company to none but pious sentiments. Who could have supposed that that girlish face, so pale and gentle, hid the unshakeable determination to expose himself to the risk of a thousand deaths rather than fail to make his fortune?

To Julien, making a fortune meant in the first place leaving Verrieres; he loathed his native place. Everything that he saw there froze his imagination.

>From his earliest boyhood, he had had moments of exaltation. At such times he dreamed with rapture that one day he would be introduced to the beautiful ladies of Paris; he would manage to attract their attention by some brilliant action. Why should he not be loved by one of them, as Bonaparte, when still penniless, had been loved by the brilliant Madame de Beauharnais? For many years now, perhaps not an hour of Julien's life had passed without his reminding himself that Bonaparte, an obscure subaltern with no fortune, had made himself master of the world with his sword. This thought consoled him for his misfortunes which he deemed to be great, and enhanced his joy when joy came his way.

The building of the church and the sentences passed by the Justice brought him sudden enlightenment; an idea which occurred to him drove him almost out of his senses for some weeks, and finally took possession of him with the absolute power of the first idea which a passionate nature believes itself to have discovered.

‘When Bonaparte made a name for himself, France was in fear of being invaded; military distinction was necessary and fashionable. Today we see priests at forty drawing stipends of a hundred thousand francs, that is to say three times as much as the famous divisional commanders under Napoleon. They must have people to support them. Look at the Justice here, so wise a man, always so honest until now, sacrificing his honour, at his age, from fear of offending a young vicar of thirty. I must become a priest.’

On one occasion, in the midst of his new-found piety, after Julien had been studying divinity for two years, he was betrayed by a sudden blaze of the fire that devoured his spirit. This was at M. Chelan’s; at a dinner party of priests, to whom the good cure had introduced him as an educational prodigy, he found himself uttering frenzied praise of Napoleon. He bound his right arm across his chest, pretending that he had put the arm out of joint when shifting a fir trunk, and kept it for two months in this awkward position. After this drastic penance, he forgave himself. Such is the young man of eighteen, but weak in appearance, whom you would have said to be, at the most, seventeen, who, carrying a small parcel under his arm, was entering the magnificent church of Verrieres.

He found it dark and deserted. In view of some festival, all the windows in the building had been covered with crimson cloth; the effect of this, when the sun shone, was a dazzling blaze of light, of the most imposing and most religious character. Julien shuddered. Being alone in the church, he took his seat on the bench that had the most handsome appearance. It bore the arms of M. de Renal.

On the desk in front, Julien observed a scrap of printed paper, spread out there as though to be read. He looked at it closely and saw:

‘Details of the execution and of the last moments of Louis Jenrel, executed at Besancon, on the . . .’

The paper was torn. On the other side he read the opening words of a line, which were: ‘The first step.’

‘Who can have put this paper here?’ said Julien. ‘Poor wretch!’ he added with a sigh, ‘his name has the same ending as mine.’ And he crumpled up the paper.

On his way out, Julien thought he saw blood by the holy water stoup; it was some of the water that had been spilt: the light from the red curtains which draped the windows made it appear like blood.

Finally, Julien felt ashamed of his secret terror.

‘Should I prove coward?’ he said to himself. ‘To arms!’

This phrase, so often repeated in the old Surgeon’s accounts of battles, had a heroic sound in Julien’s ears. He rose and walked rapidly to M. de Renal’s house.

Despite these brave resolutions, as soon as he caught sight of the house twenty yards away he was overcome by an unconquerable shyness. The iron gate stood open; it seemed to him magnificent. He would have now to go in through it.

Julien was not the only person whose heart was troubled by his arrival in this household. Madame de Renal’s extreme timidity was disconcerted by the idea of this stranger who, in the performance of his duty, would be constantly coming between her and her children. She was accustomed to having her sons sleep in her own room. That morning, many tears had flowed when she saw their little beds being carried into the apartment intended for the tutor. In vain did she beg her husband to let the bed of Stanislas Xavier, the youngest boy, be taken back to her room.

Womanly delicacy was carried to excess in Madame de Renal. She formed a mental picture of a coarse, unkempt creature, employed to scold her children, simply because he knew Latin, a barbarous tongue for the sake of which her sons would be whipped.

Chapter 6

Dullness

Non so piu cosa son, Cosa facio.

MOZART (Figaro)

With the vivacity and grace which came naturally to her when she was beyond the reach of male vision, Madame de Renal was coming out through the glass door which opened from the drawing-room into the garden, when she saw, standing by the front door, a young peasant, almost a boy still, extremely pale and showing traces of recent tears. He was wearing a clean white shirt and carried under his arm a neat jacket of violet ratteen.

This young peasant's skin was so white, his eyes were so appealing, that the somewhat romantic mind of Madame de Renal conceived the idea at first that he might be a girl in disguise, come to ask some favour of the Mayor. She felt sorry for the poor creature, who had come to a standstill by the front door, and evidently could not summon up courage to ring the bell. Madame de Renal advanced, oblivious for the moment of the bitter grief that she felt at the tutor's coming. Julien, who was facing the door, did not see her approach. He trembled when a pleasant voice sounded close to his ear:

'What have you come for, my boy?'

Julien turned sharply round, and, struck by the charm of Madame de Renal's expression, forgot part of his shyness. A moment later, astounded by her beauty, he forgot everything, even his purpose in coming. Madame de Renal had repeated her question.

‘I have come to be tutor, Madame,’ he at length informed her, put to shame by his tears which he dried as best he might.

Madame de Renal remained speechless; they were standing close together, looking at one another. Julien had never seen a person so well dressed as this, let alone a woman with so exquisite a complexion, to speak to him in a gentle tone. Madame de Renal looked at the large tears which lingered on the cheeks (so pallid at first and now so rosy) of this young peasant. Presently she burst out laughing, with all the wild hilarity of a girl; she was laughing at herself, and trying in vain to realise the full extent of her happiness. So this was the tutor whom she had imagined an unwashed and ill-dressed priest, who was coming to scold and whip her children.

‘Why, Sir!’ she said to him at length, ‘do you know Latin?’

The word ‘Sir’ came as such a surprise to Julien that he thought for a moment before answering.

‘Yes, Ma’am,’ he said shyly.

Madame de Renal felt so happy that she ventured to say to Julien:

‘You won’t scold those poor children too severely?’

‘Scold them? I?’ asked Julien in amazement. ‘Why should I?’

‘You will, Sir,’ she went on after a brief silence and in a voice that grew more emotional every moment, ‘you will be kind to them, you promise me?’

To hear himself addressed again as ‘Sir’, in all seriousness, and by a lady so fashionably attired, was more than Julien had ever dreamed of; in all the cloud castles of his boyhood, he had told himself that no fashionable lady would deign to speak to him until he had a smart uniform. Madame de Renal, for her part, was completely taken in by the beauty of Julien’s complexion, his great dark eyes and his becoming hair which was curling more than usual because, to cool himself, he had just dipped his head in the basin of the public fountain. To her great delight, she discovered an air of girlish shyness in this fatal tutor, whose severity and savage appearance she had so greatly dreaded for her children’s sake. To Madame de Renal’s peace-

loving nature the contrast between her fears and what she now saw before her was a great event. Finally she recovered from her surprise. She was astonished to find herself standing like this at the door of her house with this young man almost in his shirtsleeves and so close to her.

‘Let us go indoors, Sir,’ she said to him with an air of distinct embarrassment.

Never in her life had a purely agreeable sensation so profoundly stirred Madame de Renal; never had so charming an apparition come in the wake of more disturbing fears. And so those sweet children, whom she had tended with such care, were not to fall into the hands of a dirty, growling priest. As soon as they were in the hall, she turned to Julien who was following her shyly. His air of surprise at the sight of so fine a house was an additional charm in the eyes of Madame de Renal. She could not believe her eyes; what she felt most of all was that the tutor ought to be wearing a black coat.

‘But is it true, Sir,’ she said to him, again coming to a halt, and mortally afraid lest she might be mistaken, so happy was the belief making her, ‘do you really know Latin?’

These words hurt Julien’s pride and destroyed the enchantment in which he had been living for the last quarter of an hour.

‘Yes, Ma’am,’ he informed her, trying to adopt a chilly air; ‘I know Latin as well as M. le cure; indeed, he is sometimes so kind as to say that I know it better.’

Madame de Renal felt that Julien had a very wicked air; he had stopped within arm’s length of her. She went nearer to him, and murmured:

‘For the first few days, you won’t take the whip to my children, even if they don’t know their lessons?’

This gentle, almost beseeching tone coming from so fine a lady at once made Julien forget what he owed to his reputation as a Latin scholar. Madame de Renal’s face was close to his own, he could smell the perfume of a woman’s summer attire, so astounding a thing to a poor peasant. Julien blushed deeply, and said with a sigh and in a faint voice:

‘Fear nothing, Ma’am, I shall obey you in every respect.’

It was at this moment only, when her anxiety for her children was completely banished, that Madame de Renal was struck by Julien’s extreme good looks. The almost feminine cast of his features and his air of embarrassment did not seem in the least absurd to a woman who was extremely timid herself. The manly air which is generally considered essential to masculine beauty would have frightened her.

‘How old are you, Sir?’ she asked Julien.

‘I shall soon be nineteen.’

‘My eldest son is eleven,’ went on Madame de Renal, completely reassured; ‘he will be almost a companion for you, you can talk to him seriously. His father tried to beat him once, the child was ill for a whole week, and yet it was quite a gentle blow.’

‘How different from me,’ thought Julien. ‘Only yesterday my father was thrashing me. How fortunate these rich people are!’

Madame de Renal had by this time arrived at the stage of remarking the most trivial changes in the state of the tutor’s mind; she mistook this envious impulse for shyness, and tried to give him fresh courage.

‘What is your name, Sir?’ she asked him with an accent and a grace the charm of which Julien could feel without knowing whence it sprang.

‘They call me Julien Sorel, Ma’am; I am trembling as I enter a strange house for the first time in my life; I have need of your protection, and shall require you to forgive me many things at first. I have never been to College, I was too poor; I have never talked to any other men, except my cousin the Surgeon–Major, a Member of the Legion of Honour, and the Reverend Father Chelan. He will give you a good account of me. My brothers have always beaten me, do not listen to them if they speak evil of me to you; pardon my faults, Ma’am, I shall never have any evil intention.’

Julien plucked up his courage again during this long speech; he was studying Madame de Renal. Such is the effect of perfect grace when it is natural to the

character, particularly when she whom it adorns has no thought of being graceful. Julien, who knew all that was to be known about feminine beauty, would have sworn at that moment that she was no more than twenty. The bold idea at once occurred to him of kissing her hand. Next, this idea frightened him; a moment later, he said to himself: 'It would be cowardly on my part not to carry out an action which may be of use to me, and diminish the scorn which this fine lady probably feels for a poor workman, only just taken from the sawbench.' Perhaps Julien was somewhat encouraged by the words 'good-looking boy' which for the last six months he had been used to hearing on Sundays on the lips of various girls. While he debated thus with himself, Madame de Renal offered him a few suggestions as to how he should begin to handle her children. The violence of Julien's effort to control himself made him turn quite pale again; he said, with an air of constraint:

'Never, Ma'am, will I beat your children; I swear it before God.'

And so saying he ventured to take Madame de Renal's hand and carry it to his lips. She was astonished at this action, and, on thinking it over, shocked. As the weather was very warm, her arm was completely bare under her shawl, and Julien's action in raising her hand to his lips had uncovered it to the shoulder. A minute later she scolded herself; she felt that she had not been quickly enough offended.

M. de Renal, who had heard the sound of voices, came out of his study; with the same majestic and fatherly air that he assumed when he was conducting marriages in the Town Hall, he said to Julien:

'It is essential that I speak to you before the children see you.'

He ushered Julien into one of the rooms and detained his wife, who was going to leave them together. Having shut the door, M. de Renal seated himself with gravity.

'The cure has told me that you were an honest fellow, everyone in this house will treat you with respect, and if I am satisfied I shall help you to set up for yourself later on. I wish you to cease to see anything of either your family or your friends, their tone would not be suited to my children. Here are thirty-

six francs for the first month; but I must have your word that you will not give a penny of this money to your father.'

M. de Renal was annoyed with the old man, who, in this business, had proved more subtle than he himself.

'And now, Sir, for by my orders everyone in this house is to address you as Sir, and you will be conscious of the advantage of entering a well-ordered household; now, Sir, it is not proper that the children should see you in a jacket. Have the servants seen him?' M. de Renal asked his wife.

'No, dear,' she replied with an air of deep thought.

'Good. Put on this,' he said to the astonished young man, handing him one of his own frock coats. 'And now let us go to M. Durand, the clothier.'

More than an hour later, when M. de Renal returned with the new tutor dressed all in black, he found his wife still seated in the same place. She felt soothed by Julien's presence; as she studied his appearance she forgot to feel afraid. Julien was not giving her a thought; for all his mistrust of destiny and of mankind, his heart at that moment was just like a child's; he seemed to have lived whole years since the moment when, three hours earlier, he stood trembling in the church. He noticed Madame de Renal's frigid manner, and gathered that she was angry because he had ventured to kiss her hand. But the sense of pride that he derived from the contact of garments so different from those which he was accustomed to wear caused him so much excitement, and he was so anxious to conceal his joy that all his gestures were more or less abrupt and foolish. Madame de Renal gazed at him with eyes of astonishment.

'A little gravity, Sir,' M. de Renal told him, 'if you wish to be respected by my children and my servants.'

'Sir,' replied Julien, 'I am uncomfortable in these new clothes; I, a humble peasant, have never worn any but short jackets; with your permission, I shall retire to my bedroom.'

'What think you of this new acquisition?' M. de Renal asked his wife.

With an almost instinctive impulse, of which she herself certainly was not aware, Madame de Renal concealed the truth from her husband.

‘I am by no means as enchanted as you are with this little peasant; your kindness will turn him into an impertinent rascal whom you will be obliged to send packing within a month.’

‘Very well! We shall send him packing; he will have cost me a hundred francs or so, and Verrieres will have grown used to seeing a tutor with M. de Renal’s children. That point I should not have gained if I had let Julien remain in the clothes of a working man. When I dismiss him, I shall of course keep the black suit which I have just ordered from the clothier. He shall have nothing but the coat I found ready made at the tailor’s, which he is now wearing.’

The hour which Julien spent in his room seemed like a second to Madame de Renal. The children, who had been told of their new tutor’s arrival, overwhelmed their mother with questions. Finally Julien appeared. He was another man. It would have been straining the word to say that he was grave; he was gravity incarnate. He was introduced to the children, and spoke to them with an air that surprised M. de Renal himself.

‘I am here, young gentlemen,’ he told them at the end of his address, ‘to teach you Latin. You know what is meant by repeating a lesson. Here is the Holy Bible,’ he said, and showed them a tiny volume in 32mo, bound in black. ‘It is in particular the story of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that is the part which is called the New Testament. I shall often make you repeat lessons; now you must make me repeat mine.’

Adolphe, the eldest boy, had taken the book.

‘Open it where you please,’ Julien went on, ‘and tell me the first word of a paragraph. I shall repeat by heart the sacred text, the rule of conduct for us all, until you stop me.’

Adolphe opened the book, read a word, and Julien repeated the whole page as easily as though he were speaking French. M. de Renal looked at his wife with an air of triumph. The children, seeing their parents’ amazement,

opened their eyes wide. A servant came to the door of the drawing-room, Julien went on speaking in Latin. The servant at first stood motionless and then vanished. Presently the lady's maid and the cook appeared in the doorway; by this time Adolphe had opened the book at eight different places, and Julien continued to repeat the words with the same ease.

'Eh, what a bonny little priest,' the cook, a good and truly devout girl, said aloud.

M. de Renal's self-esteem was troubled; so far from having any thought of examining the tutor, he was engaged in ransacking his memory for a few words of Latin; at last, he managed to quote a line of Horace. Julien knew no Latin apart from the Bible. He replied with a frown:

'The sacred ministry to which I intend to devote myself has forbidden me to read so profane a poet.'

M. de Renal repeated a fair number of alleged lines of Horace. He explained to his children what Horace was; but the children, overcome with admiration, paid little attention to what he was saying. They were watching Julien.

The servants being still at the door, Julien felt it incumbent upon him to prolong the test.

'And now,' he said to the youngest boy, 'Master Stanislas Xavier too must set me a passage from the Holy Book.'

Little Stanislas, swelling with pride, read out to the best of his ability the opening words of a paragraph, and Julien repeated the whole page. That nothing might be wanting to complete M. de Renal's triumph, while Julien was reciting, there entered M. Valenod, the possessor of fine Norman horses, and M. Charcot de Maugiron, Sub–Prefect of the district. This scene earned for Julien the title 'Sir'; the servants themselves dared not withhold it from him.

That evening, the whole of Verrieres flocked to M. de Renal's to behold the marvel. Julien answered them all with an air of gloom which kept them at a distance. His fame spread so rapidly through the town that, shortly

afterwards, M. de Renal, afraid of losing him, suggested his signing a contract for two years.

‘No, Sir,’ Julien replied coldly, ‘if you chose to dismiss me I should be obliged to go. A contract which binds me without putting you under any obligation is unfair, I must decline.’

Julien managed so skilfully that, less than a month after his coming to the house, M. de Renal himself respected him. The cure having quarrelled with MM. de Renal and Valenod, there was no one who could betray Julien’s former passion for Napoleon, of whom he was careful to speak with horror.

Chapter 7

Elective Affinities

They can only touch the heart by bruising it.

A MODERN

The children adored him, he did not care for them; his thoughts were elsewhere. Nothing that these urchins could do ever tried his patience. Cold, just, impassive, and at the same time loved, because his coming had in a measure banished dullness from the house, he was a good tutor. For his part, he felt only hatred and horror for the high society in which he was allowed to occupy the very foot of the table, a position which may perhaps explain his hatred and horror. There were certain formal dinners at which he could barely contain his loathing of everything round about him. On Saint Louis's day in particular, M. Valenod was laying down the law at M. de Renal's; Julien almost gave himself away; he escaped into the garden, saying that he must look after the children. 'What panegyrics of honesty!' he exclaimed; 'anyone would say that was the one and only virtue; and yet what consideration, what a cringing respect for a man who obviously has doubled and tripled his fortune since he has been in charge of the relief of the poor! I would wager that he makes something even out of the fund set apart for the foundlings, those wretches whose need is even more sacred than that of the other paupers. Ah, monsters! Monsters! And I too, I am a sort of foundling, hated by my father, my brothers, my whole family.'

Some days earlier, Julien walking by himself and saying his office in a little wood, known as the Belvedere, which overlooks the Cours de la Fidelite, had tried in vain to avoid his two brothers, whom he saw approaching him by a solitary path. The jealousy of these rough labourers had been so

quickened by the sight of their brother's handsome black coat, and air of extreme gentility, as well as by the sincere contempt which he felt for them, that they had proceeded to thrash him, leaving him there unconscious and bleeding freely. Madame de Renal, who was out walking with M. Valenod and the Sub–Prefect, happened to turn into the little wood; she saw Julien lying on the ground and thought him dead. She was so overcome as to make M. Valenod jealous.

His alarm was premature. Julien admired Madame de Renal's looks, but hated her for her beauty; it was the first reef on which his fortune had nearly foundered. He spoke to her as seldom as possible, in the hope of making her forget the impulse which, at their first encounter, had led him to kiss her hand.

Elisa, Madame de Renal's maid, had not failed to fall in love with the young tutor; she often spoke of him to her mistress. Miss Elisa's love had brought upon Julien the hatred of one of the footmen. One day he heard this man say to Elisa: 'You won't speak to me any more, since that greasy tutor has been in the house.' Julien did not deserve the epithet; but, with the instinct of a good-looking youth, became doubly attentive to his person. M. Valenod's hatred was multiplied accordingly. He said in public that so much concern with one's appearance was not becoming in a young cleric. Barring the cassock, Julien now wore clerical attire.

Madame de Renal observed that he was speaking more often than before to Miss Elisa; she learned that these conversations were due to the limitations of Julien's extremely small wardrobe. He had so scanty a supply of linen that he was obliged to send it out constantly to be washed, and it was in performing these little services that Elisa made herself useful to him.

This extreme poverty, of which she had had no suspicion, touched Madame de Renal; she longed to make him presents, but did not dare; this inward resistance was the first feeling of regret that Julien caused her. Until then the name of Julien and the sense of a pure and wholly intellectual joy had been synonymous to her. Tormented by the idea of Julien's poverty, Madame de Renal spoke to her husband about making him a present of linen:

‘What idiocy!’ he replied. ‘What! Make presents to a man with whom we are perfectly satisfied, and who is serving us well? It is when he neglects his duty that we should stimulate his zeal.’

Madame de Renal felt ashamed of this way of looking at things; before Julien came she would not have noticed it. She never saw the young cleric’s spotless, though very simple, toilet without asking herself: ‘Poor boy, how ever does he manage?’

As time went on she began to feel sorry for Julien’s deficiencies, instead of being shocked by them.

Madame de Renal was one of those women to be found in the provinces whom one may easily take to be fools until one has known them for a fortnight. She had no experience of life, and made no effort at conversation. Endowed with a delicate and haughty nature, that instinct for happiness natural to all human beings made her, generally speaking, pay no attention to the actions of the coarse creatures into whose midst chance had flung her.

She would have been remarkable for her naturalness and quickness of mind, had she received the most scanty education; but in her capacity as an heiress she had been brought up by nuns who practised a passionate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and were animated by a violent hatred of the French as being enemies of the Jesuits. Madame de Renal had sufficient sense to forget at once, as absurdities, everything she had learned in the convent; but she put nothing else in its place, and ended by knowing nothing. The flatteries of which she had been the precocious object, as the heiress to a large fortune, and a marked tendency towards passionate devotion, had bred in her an attitude towards life that was wholly inward. With an outward show of the most perfect submission, and a self-suppression which the husbands of Verrieres used to quote as an example to their wives, and which was a source of pride to M. de Renal, her inner life was, as a matter of fact, dictated by the most lofty disdain. Any princess who is quoted as an illustration of pride pays infinitely more attention to what her gentlemen are doing round about her than this meekest of women, so modest in appearance, gave to anything that her husband said or did. Until Julien arrived, she had really paid no attention to anyone but her children. Their little illnesses, their sorrows, their little pleasures absorbed the whole sensibility of this human soul, which had

never, in the whole of her life, adored anyone save God, while she was at the Sacred Heart in Besancon.

Although she did not condescend to say so to anyone, a feverish attack coming to one of her sons threw her almost into the same state as if the child had died. A burst of coarse laughter, a shrug of the shoulders, accompanied by some trivial maxim as to the foolishness of women, had regularly greeted the confessions of grief of this sort which the need of an outlet had led her to make to her husband during the first years of their married life. Witticisms of this sort, especially when they bore upon the illnesses of the children, turned the dagger in Madame de Renal's heart. This was all the substitute she found for the obsequious, honeyed flatteries of the Jesuitical convent in which she had passed her girlhood. She was educated in the school of suffering. Too proud to speak of griefs of this sort, even to her friend Madame Derville, she imagined that all men resembled her husband, M. Valenod, and the Sub–Prefect Charcot de Maugiron. Coarse wit and the most brutal insensibility to everything that did not promise money, promotion or a Cross; a blind hatred of every argument that went against them seemed to her to be things natural to the male sex, like the wearing of boots and felt hats.

After many long years, Madame de Renal had not yet grown accustomed to these money-grubbing creatures among whom she had to live.

Hence the success of the little peasant Julien. She found much pleasant enjoyment, radiant with the charm of novelty, in the sympathy of this proud and noble spirit. Madame de Renal had soon forgiven him his extreme ignorance, which was an additional charm, and the roughness of his manners, which she succeeded in improving. She found that it was worth her while to listen to him, even when they spoke of the most ordinary things, even when it was a question of a poor dog that had been run over, as it was crossing the street, by a peasant's cart going by at a trot. The sight of such a tragedy made her husband utter his coarse laugh, whereas she saw Julien's fine, beautifully arched black eyebrows wince. Generosity, nobility of soul, humanity, seemed to her, after a time, to exist only in this young cleric. She felt for him alone all the sympathy and even admiration which those virtues arouse in well-bred natures.

In Paris, Julien's position with regard to Madame de Renal would very soon have been simplified; but in Paris love is the child of the novels. The young tutor and his timid mistress would have found in three or four novels, and even in the lyrics of the Gymnase, a clear statement of their situation. The novels would have outlined for them the part to be played, shown them the model to copy; and this model, sooner or later, albeit without the slightest pleasure, and perhaps with reluctance, vanity would have compelled Julien to follow.

In a small town of the Aveyron or the Pyrenees, the slightest incident would have been made decisive by the ardour of the climate. Beneath our more sombre skies, a penniless young man, who is ambitious only because the refinement of his nature puts him in need of some of those pleasures which money provides, is in daily contact with a woman of thirty who is sincerely virtuous, occupied with her children, and never looks to novels for examples of conduct. Everything goes slowly, everything happens by degrees in the provinces: life is more natural.

Often, when she thought of the young tutor's poverty, Madame de Renal was moved to tears. Julien came upon her, one day, actually crying.

'Ah, Ma'am, you have had some bad news!'

'No, my friend,' was her answer: 'Call the children, let us go for a walk.'

She took his arm and leaned on it in a manner which Julien thought strange. It was the first time that she had called him 'my friend'.

Towards the end of their walk, Julien observed that she was blushing deeply. She slackened her pace.

'You will have heard,' she said without looking at him, 'that I am the sole heiress of a very rich aunt who lives at Besancon. She loads me with presents. My sons are making . . . such astonishing progress . . . that I should like to ask you to accept a little present, as a token of my gratitude. It is only a matter of a few louis to supply you with linen. But—' she added, blushing even more deeply, and was silent.

'What, Ma'am?' said Julien.

‘It would be unnecessary,’ she went on, lowering her head, ‘to speak of this to my husband.’

‘I may be humble, Ma’am, but I am not base,’ replied Julien coming to a standstill, his eyes ablaze with anger, and drawing himself up to his full height. ‘That is a point which you have not sufficiently considered. I should be less than a footman if I put myself in the position of hiding from M. de Renal anything that had to do with my money.’

Madame de Renal was overwhelmed.

‘The Mayor,’ Julien went on, ‘has given me thirty-six francs five times since I came to live in his house; I am prepared to show my account-book to M. de Renal or to anyone else, including M. Valenod who hates me.’

This outburst left Madame de Renal pale and trembling, and the walk came to an end before either of them could find an excuse for renewing the conversation. Love for Madame de Renal became more and more impossible in the proud heart of Julien: as for her, she respected, she admired him; she had been scolded by him. On the pretext of making amends for the humiliation which she had unintentionally caused him, she allowed herself to pay him the most delicate attentions. The novelty of this procedure kept her happy for a week. Its effect was to some extent to appease Julien’s anger; he was far from seeing anything in it that could be mistaken for personal affection.

‘That,’ he said to himself, ‘is what rich people are like: they humiliate one, and then think they can put things right by a few monkey-tricks.’

Madame de Renal’s heart was too full, and as yet too innocent for her, notwithstanding the resolutions she had made, not to tell her husband of the offer she had made to Julien and the manner in which she had been repulsed.

‘What,’ M. de Renal retorted, with keen annoyance, ‘could you tolerate a refusal from a servant?’

And as Madame de Renal protested at this word:

‘I speak, Ma’am, as the late Prince de Conde spoke, when presenting his Chamberlains to his bride: “All these people,” he told her, “are our servants.” I read you the passage from Besenval’s Memoirs, it is essential in questions of precedence. Everyone who is not a gentleman, who lives in your house and receives a salary, is your servant. I shall say a few words to this Master Julien, and give him a hundred francs.’

‘Ah, my dear,’ said Madame de Renal trembling, ‘please do not say anything in front of the servants.’

‘Yes, they might be jealous, and rightly,’ said her husband as he left the room, thinking of the magnitude of the sum.

Madame de Renal sank down on a chair, almost fainting with grief. ‘He is going to humiliate Julien, and it is my fault!’ She felt a horror of her husband, and hid her face in her hands. She promised herself that she would never confide anything in him again.

When she next saw Julien, she was trembling all over, her bosom was so contracted that she could not manage to utter a single word. In her embarrassment she took his hands and wrung them.

‘Well, my friend,’ she said to him after a little, ‘are you pleased with my husband?’

‘How should I not be?’ Julien answered with a bitter smile; ‘he has given me a hundred francs.’

Madame de Renal looked at him as though uncertain what to do.

‘Give me your arm,’ she said at length with an accent of courage which Julien had never yet observed in her.

She ventured to enter the shop of the Verrieres bookseller, in spite of his terrible reputation as a Liberal. There she chose books to the value of ten louis which she gave to her sons. But these books were the ones which she knew that Julien wanted. She insisted that there, in the bookseller’s shop, each of the children should write his own name in the books that fell to his share. While Madame de Renal was rejoicing at the partial reparation which

she had had the courage to make to Julien, he was lost in amazement at the quantity of books which he saw on the bookseller's shelves. Never had he dared to set foot in so profane a place; his heart beat violently. So far from his having any thought of trying to guess what was occurring in the heart of Madame de Renal, he was plunged in meditation as to how it would be possible for a young student of divinity to procure some of these books. At length the idea came to him that it might be possible, by a skilful approach, to persuade M. de Renal that he ought to set his sons, as the subject for an essay, the lives of the celebrated gentlemen who were natives of the province. After a month of careful preliminaries, he saw his idea prove successful, so much so that, shortly afterwards, he ventured, in speaking to M. de Renal, to mention an action considerably more offensive to the noble Mayor; it was a matter of contributing to the prosperity of a Liberal, by taking out a subscription at the library. M. de Renal entirely agreed that it was wise to let his eldest son have a visual impression of various works which he would hear mentioned in conversation when he went to the Military School; but Julien found the Mayor obdurate in refusing to go any farther. He suspected a secret reason, which he was unable to guess.

'I was thinking, Sir,' he said to him one day, 'that it would be highly improper for the name of a respectable gentleman like a Renal to appear on the dirty ledger of the librarian.'

M. de Renal's face brightened.

'It would also be a very bad mark,' Julien went on, in a humbler tone, 'against a poor divinity student, if it should one day be discovered that his name had been on the ledger of a bookseller who keeps a library. The Liberals might accuse me of having asked for the most scandalous books; for all one knows they might even go so far as to write in after my name the titles of those perverse works.'

But Julien was going off the track. He saw the Mayor's features resume their expression of embarrassment and ill humour. Julien was silent. 'I have my man hooked,' he said to himself.

A few days later, on the eldest boy's questioning Julien as to a book advertised in the Quotidienne, in M. de Renal's presence:

‘To remove all occasion for triumph from the Jacobin Party,’ said the young tutor, ‘and at the same time to enable me to answer Master Adolphe, one might open a subscription at the bookshop in the name of the lowest of your servants.’

‘That is not at all a bad idea,’ said M. de Renal, obviously delighted.

‘Only it would have to be specified,’ said Julien with that grave and almost sorrowful air which becomes certain people so well, when they see the success of the projects which have been longest in their minds, ‘it would have to be specified that the servant shall not take out any novels. Once they were in the house, those dangerous works might corrupt Madame’s maids, not to speak of the servant himself.’

‘You forget the political pamphlets,’ added M. de Renal, in a haughty tone. He wished to conceal the admiration that he felt for the clever middle course discovered by his children’s tutor.

Julien’s life was thus composed of a series of petty negotiations; and their success was of far more importance to him than the evidence of a marked preference for himself which was only waiting for him to read it in the heart of Madame de Renal.

The moral environment in which he had been placed all his life was repeated in the household of the worshipful Mayor of Verrieres. There, as in his father’s sawmill, he profoundly despised the people with whom he lived, and was hated by them. He saw every day, from the remarks made by the Sub–Prefect, by M. Valenod and by the other friends of the family, with reference to the things that had just happened under their eyes, how remote their ideas were from any semblance of reality. Did an action strike him as admirable, it was precisely what called forth blame from the people round about him. His unspoken retort was always: ‘What monsters!’ or ‘What fools!’ The amusing thing was that, with all his pride, frequently he understood nothing at all of what was being discussed.

In his whole life, he had never spoken with sincerity except to the old Surgeon–Major; the few ideas that he had bore reference to Napoleon’s campaigns in Italy, or to surgery. His youthful courage took delight in

detailed accounts of the most painful operations; he said to himself: ‘I should not have flinched.’

The first time that Madame de Renal attempted a conversation with him on a subject other than that of the children’s education, he began to talk of surgical operations; she turned pale, and begged him to stop.

Julien knew nothing apart from these matters. And so, as he spent his time with Madame de Renal, the strangest silence grew up between them as soon as they were alone together. In her own drawing-room, humble as his bearing was, she found in his eyes an air of intellectual superiority over everyone that came to the house. Were she left alone for a moment with him, she saw him grow visibly embarrassed. This troubled her, for her womanly instinct made her realise that his embarrassment was not in the least degree amorous.

In consequence of some idea derived from a description of good society, as the old Surgeon–Major had beheld it, as soon as conversation ceased in a place where he found himself in the company of a woman, Julien felt abashed, as though he himself were specially to blame for this silence. This sensation was a hundred times more painful when they were alone. His imagination, full of the most extravagant, the most Spanish notions as to what a man ought to say, when he is alone with a woman, offered him in his agitation none but inadmissible ideas. His soul was in the clouds, and yet he was incapable of breaking the most humiliating silence. Thus his air of severity, during his long walks with Madame de Renal and the children, was intensified by the most cruel sufferings. He despised himself hideously. If by mischance he forced himself to speak, he found himself saying the most ridiculous things. To increase his misery, he saw and exaggerated his own absurdity; but what he did not see was the expression in his eyes, they were so fine and revealed so burning a soul that, like good actors, they imparted at times a charming meaning to what was meaningless. Madame de Renal remarked that, when alone with her, he never expressed himself well except when he was distracted by some unforeseen occurrence, he never thought of turning a compliment. As the friends of the family did not spoil her by offering her new and brilliant ideas, she took a delight in the flashes of Julien’s intellect.

Since the fall of Napoleon, all semblance of gallantry in speech has been sternly banished from the code of provincial behaviour. People are afraid of losing their posts. The unscrupulous seek support from the Congregation and hypocrisy has made the most brilliant advances even among the Liberal classes. Dulness increases. No pleasure is left, save in reading and agriculture.

Madame de Renal, the wealthy heiress of a religious aunt, married at sixteen to a worthy gentleman, had never in her life felt or seen anything that bore the faintest resemblance to love. Her confessor, the good cure Chelan, was the only person almost who had ever spoken to her of love, with reference to the advances of M. Valenod, and he had drawn so revolting a picture of it that the word conveyed nothing to her but the idea of the most abject immorality. She regarded as an exception, or rather as something quite apart from nature, love such as she had found it in the very small number of novels that chance had brought to her notice. Thanks to this ignorance, Madame de Renal, entirely happy, occupied incessantly with the thought of Julien, was far from reproaching herself in the slightest degree.

Chapter 8

Minor Events

Then there were sighs, the deeper for suppression,

And stolen glances, sweeter for the theft,

And burning blushes, though for no transgression.

Don Juan, I. 74

The angelic sweetness which Madame de Renal derived from her own character as well as from her present happiness was interrupted only when she happened to think of her maid Elisa. This young woman received a legacy, went to make her confession to the cure Chelan, and revealed to him her intention to marry Julien. The cure was genuinely delighted at his friend's good fortune; but his surprise was great when Julien informed him with a resolute air that Miss Elisa's offer could not be accepted.

'Pay good heed, my son, to what is taking place in your heart,' said the cure, frowning; 'I congratulate you on your vocation, if it is to it alone that must be ascribed your scorn of a more than adequate provision. For fifty-six years and more have I been cure at Verrieres, and yet, so far as one can see, I am going to be deprived. This distresses me, albeit I have an income of eight hundred livres. I tell you of this detail in order that you may not be under any illusion as to what is in store for you in the priestly calling. If you think of paying court to the men in power, your eternal ruin is assured. You may make your fortune, but you will have to injure the poor and needy, flatter the Sub–Prefect, the Mayor, the important person, and minister to his passions: such conduct, which in the world is called the art of life, may, in a layman,

be not wholly incompatible with salvation; but in our calling, we have to choose; we must make our fortune either in this world or in the next, there is no middle way. Go, my dear friend, reflect, and come back in three days' time with a definite answer. I am sorry to see underlying your character, a smouldering ardour which does not suggest to my mind the moderation and complete renunciation of earthly advantages necessary in a priest; I augur well from your intelligence; but, allow me to tell you,' the good cure went on, with tears in his eyes, 'in the calling of a priest, I shall tremble for your salvation.'

Julien was ashamed of his emotion; for the first time in his life, he saw himself loved; he wept for joy, and went to hide his tears in the great woods above Verrieres.

'Why am I in this state?' he asked himself at length; 'I feel that I would give my life a hundred times over for that good Father Chelan, and yet he has just proved to me that I am no better than a fool. It is he above all that I have to deceive, and he sees through me. That secret ardour of which he speaks is my plan for making my fortune. He thinks me unfit to be a priest, at the very moment when I imagined that the sacrifice of an income of fifty louis was going to give him the most exalted idea of my piety and my vocation.

'For the future,' Julien continued, 'I shall rely only upon those elements of my character which I have tested. Who would ever have said that I should find pleasure in shedding tears? That I should love the man who proves to me that I am nothing more than a fool?'

Three days later, Julien had found the pretext with which he should have armed himself from the first; this pretext was a calumny, but what of that? He admitted to the cure, after much hesitation, that a reason which he could not explain to him, because to reveal it would injure a third party, had dissuaded him from the first from the projected marriage. This was tantamount to an indictment of Elisa's conduct. M. Chelan detected in his manner a fire that was wholly mundane, and very different from that which should have inspired a young Levite.

'My friend,' he appealed to him again, 'be an honest yeoman, educated and respected, rather than a priest without a vocation.'

Julien replied to these fresh remonstrances extremely well, so far as words went; he hit upon the expressions which a fervent young seminarist would have employed; but the tone in which he uttered them, the ill-concealed fire that smouldered in his eyes alarmed M. Chelan.

We need not augur ill for Julien's future; he hit upon the correct form of words of a cunning and prudent hypocrisy. That is not bad at his age. As for his tone and gestures, he lived among country folk; he had been debarred from seeing the great models. In the sequel, no sooner had he been permitted to mix with these gentlemen than he became admirable as well in gesture as in speech.

Madame de Renal was surprised that her maid's newly acquired fortune had not made the girl more happy; she saw her going incessantly to the cure's, and returning with tears in her eyes; finally Elisa spoke to her mistress of her marriage.

Madame de Renal believed herself to have fallen ill; a sort of fever prevented her enjoying any sleep; she was alive only when she had her maid or Julien before her eyes. She could think of nothing but them and the happiness they would find in their married life. The poverty of the small house in which people would be obliged to live, with an income of fifty louis, portrayed itself to her in enchanting colours. Julien might very well become a lawyer at Bray, the Sub–Prefecture two leagues from Verrieres; in that event she would see something of him.

Madame de Renal sincerely believed that she was going mad; she said so to her husband, and finally did fall ill. That evening, as her maid was waiting upon her, she noticed that the girl was crying. She loathed Elisa at that moment, and had spoken sharply to her; she begged the girl's pardon. Elisa's tears increased; she said that if her mistress would allow it, she would tell her the whole tale of her distress.

'Speak,' replied Madame de Renal.

'Well, the fact is, Ma'am, he won't have me; wicked people must have spoken evil of me to him, and he believes them.'

‘Who won’t have you?’ said Madame de Renal, scarcely able to breathe.

‘And who could it be, Ma’am, but M. Julien?’ the maid replied through her sobs. ‘His Reverence has failed to overcome his resistance; for His Reverence considers that he ought not to refuse a decent girl, just because she has been a lady’s maid. After all, M. Julien’s own father is no better than a carpenter; and he himself, how was he earning his living before he came to Madame’s?’

Madame de Renal had ceased to listen; surfeit of happiness had almost deprived her of the use of her reason. She made the girl repeat to her several times the assurance that Julien had refused in a positive manner, which would not permit of his coming to a more reasonable decision later on.

‘I wish to make a final effort,’ she said to her maid. ‘I shall speak to M. Julien.’

Next day after luncheon, Madame de Renal gave herself the exquisite sensation of pleading her rival’s cause, and of seeing Elisa’s hand and fortune persistently refused for an hour on end.

Little by little Julien abandoned his attitude of studied reserve, and ended by making spirited answers to the sound arguments advanced by Madame de Renal. She could not hold out against the torrent of happiness which now poured into her heart after all those days of despair. She found herself really ill. When she had come to herself, and was comfortably settled in her own room, she asked to be left alone. She was in a state of profound astonishment.

‘Can I be in love with Julien?’ she asked herself at length.

This discovery, which at any other time would have filled her with remorse and with a profound agitation, was no more to her than a singular spectacle, but one that left her indifferent. Her heart, exhausted by all that she had just undergone, had no sensibility left to place at the service of her passions.

Madame de Renal tried to work, and fell into a deep sleep; when she awoke, she was less alarmed than she should have been. She was too happy to be able to take anything amiss. Artless and innocent as she was, this honest

provincial had never tormented her soul in an attempt to wring from it some little sensibility to some novel shade of sentiment or distress. Entirely absorbed, before Julien came, in that mass of work which, outside Paris, is the lot of a good wife and mother, Madame de Renal thought about the passions, as we think about the lottery: a certain disappointment and a happiness sought by fools alone.

The dinner bell rang; Madame de Renal blushed deeply when she heard Julien's voice as he brought in the children. Having acquired some adroitness since she had fallen in love, she accounted for her colour by complaining of a splitting headache.

'There you have women,' put in M. de Renal, with a coarse laugh. 'There's always something out of order in their machinery.'

Accustomed as she was to this form of wit, the tone of his voice hurt Madame de Renal. She sought relief in studying Julien's features; had he been the ugliest man in the world, he would have charmed her at that moment.

Always zealous in imitating the habits of the Court, with the first fine days of spring M. de Renal removed his household to Vergy; it is the village rendered famous by the tragic adventure of Gabrielle. A few hundred yards from the picturesque ruins of the old gothic church, M. de Renal owned an old castle with its four towers, and a garden laid out like that of the Tuileries, with a number of box borders, and chestnut alleys trimmed twice in the year. An adjoining field, planted with apple trees, allowed the family to take the air. Nine or ten splendid walnuts grew at the end of the orchard; their massive foliage rose to a height of some eighty feet.

'Each of those damned walnuts,' M. de Renal would say when his wife admired them, 'costs me half an acre of crop; the corn will not grow in their shade.'

The rustic scene appeared to come as a novelty to Madame de Renal; her admiration knew no bounds. The feeling that animated her gave her a new spirit and determination. On the second day after their removal to Vergy, M. de Renal having returned to town upon some official business, his wife

engaged labourers at her own expense. Julien had given her the idea of a little gravelled path, which should run round the orchard and beneath the big walnuts, and would allow the children to walk there in the early morning without wetting their shoes in the dew. This plan was put into execution within twenty-four hours of its conception. Madame de Renal spent a long and happy day with Julieu supervising the labourers.

When the Mayor of Verrieres returned from the town, he was greatly surprised to find the path finished. His coming surprised Madame de Renal also; she had forgotten that he existed. For the next two months, he continued to speak with annoyance of their presumption in having carried out, without consulting him, so important a repair, but Madame de Renal had done it at her own expense, and this to some extent consoled him.

She spent her days running about the orchard with her children, and chasing butterflies. They had made a number of large nets of light-coloured gauze, with which they caught the unfortunate lepidoptera. This was the outlandish name which Julien taught Madame de Renal. For she had sent to Besancon for the handsome work on the subject by M. Godart; and Julien read to her the strange habits of these insects.

They fastened them, without compunction, with pins upon a large sheet of pasteboard, also prepared by Julien.

At last Madame de Renal and Julien had a subject for conversation; he was no longer exposed to the frightful torture inflicted on him by intervals of silence.

They conversed incessantly, and with extreme interest, although always of the most innocent things. This life, active, occupied and cheerful, suited everyone, except Miss Elisa, who found herself worked to death. ‘Even at carnival-time,’ she said, ‘when there is a ball at Verrieres, Madame has never taken so much trouble over her dress; she changes her clothes two or three times a day.’

As it is our intention to flatter no one, we shall not conceal the fact that Madame de Renal, who had a superb skin, had dresses made for her which

exposed her arms and bosom freely. She was very well made, and this way of dressing suited her to perfection.

‘You have never been so young, Ma’am,’ her friends from Verrieres used to tell her when they came to dine at Vergy. (It is a local form of speech.)

A curious point, which our readers will scarcely believe, was that Madame de Renal had no deliberate intention in taking such pains with her appearance. She enjoyed doing so; and, without giving the matter any particular thought, whenever she was not chasing butterflies with the children and Julien, she was engaged with Elisa making dresses. Her one expedition to Verrieres was due to a desire to purchase new summer clothes which had just arrived there from Mulhouse.

She brought back with her to Vergy a young woman, one of her cousins. Since her marriage, Madame de Renal had gradually formed an intimate friendship with Madame Derville, who in their younger days had been her school-fellow at the Sacre–Coeur.

Madame Derville laughed heartily at what she called her cousin’s absurd ideas. ‘If I were alone, they would never occur to me,’ she used to say. These sudden ideas, which in Paris would have been called sallies, made Madame de Renal feel ashamed, as of something foolish, when she was with her husband; but Madame Derville’s presence gave her courage. She began by telling her what she was thinking in a timid voice; when the ladies were by themselves for any length of time, Madame de Renal would become animated, and a long, undisturbed morning passed in a flash and left the friends quite merry. On this visit, the sensible Madame Derville found her cousin much less merry and much happier.

Julien, meanwhile, had been living the life of a child since he had come to the country, as happy to be running after butterflies as were his pupils. After so much constraint and skilful diplomacy, alone, unobserved by his fellow-men, and, instinctively, feeling not in the least afraid of Madame de Renal, he gave himself up to the pleasure of being alive, so keen at his age, and in the midst of the fairest mountains in the world.

As soon as Madame Derville arrived, Julien felt that she was his friend; he hastened to show her the view that was to be seen from the end of the new path; as a matter of fact it was equal, if not superior to the most admirable scenery which Switzerland and the Italian lakes have to offer. By climbing the steep slope which began a few yards farther on, one came presently to high precipices fringed with oakwoods, which projected almost over the bed of the river. It was to the summits of these sheer rocks that Julien, happy, free, and indeed something more, lord of the house, led the two friends, and relished their admiration of those sublime prospects.

'To me it is like Mozart's music,' said Madame Derville.

His brothers' jealousy, the presence of a despotic and ill-tempered father had spoiled the country round Verrieres in Julien's eyes. At Vergy, he found no trace of these unpleasant memories; for the first time in his life, he could see no one that was his enemy. When M. de Renal was in town, as frequently happened, he ventured to read; soon, instead of reading at night, and then taking care, moreover, to shade his lamp with an inverted flower-pot, he could take his full measure of sleep; during the day, in the interval between the children's lessons, he climbed up among these rocks with the book that was his sole rule of conduct, and the sole object of his transports. He found in it at once happiness, ecstasy and consolation in moments of depression.

Certain things which Napoleon says of women, various discussions of the merits of the novels in vogue during his reign, furnished him now, for the first time, with several ideas which would long since have been familiar to any other young man of his age.

The hot weather came. They formed the habit of spending the evening under a huge lime a few yards from the house. There the darkness was intense. One evening, Julien was talking with emphasis, he was revelling in the pleasure of talking well and to young married women; as he gesticulated, he touched the hand of Madame de Renal, who was leaning on the back of one of those chairs of painted wood that are placed in gardens.

The hand was hurriedly withdrawn; but Julien decided that it was his duty to secure that the hand should not be withdrawn when he touched it. The idea of a duty to be performed, and of making himself ridiculous, or rather being

left with a sense of inferiority if he did not succeed in performing it, at once took all the pleasure from his heart.

Chapter 9

An Evening in the Country

M. Guerin's Dido, a charming sketch!

STROMBECK

When he saw Madame de Renal again, the next morning, there was a strange look in his eyes; he watched her like an enemy with whom he would presently be engaged. This expression, so different from his expression overnight, made Madame de Renal lose her head; she had been kind to him, and he appeared vexed. She could not take her eyes from his.

Madame Derville's presence excused Julien from his share of the conversation, and enabled him to concentrate his attention upon what he had in mind. His sole occupation, throughout the day, was that of fortifying himself by reading the inspired text which refreshed his soul.

He greatly curtailed the children's lessons, and when, later on, the presence of Madame de Renal recalled him to the service of his own vanity, decided that it was absolutely essential that this evening she should allow her hand to remain in his.

The sun as it set and so brought nearer the decisive moment made Julien's heart beat with a strange excitement. Night fell. He observed, with a joy that lifted a huge weight from his breast, that it was very dark. A sky packed with big clouds, kept in motion by a hot breeze, seemed to forebode a tempest. The two women continued strolling until a late hour. Everything that they did this evening seemed strange to Julien. They were enjoying this weather, which, in certain delicate natures, seems to enhance the pleasure of love.

At last they sat down, Madame de Renal next to Julien, and Madame Derville on the other side of her friend. Preoccupied with the attempt he must shortly make, Julien could think of nothing to say. The conversation languished.

‘Shall I tremble like this and feel as uncomfortable the first time I have to fight a duel?’ Julien wondered; for he had too little confidence either in himself or in others not to observe the state he was in.

In this agonising uncertainty, any danger would have seemed to him preferable. How often did he long to see Madame de Renal called by some duty which would oblige her to return to the house and so leave the garden! The violence of the effort which Julien had to make to control himself was such that his voice was entirely altered; presently Madame de Renal’s voice became tremulous also, but Julien never noticed this. The ruthless warfare which his sense of duty was waging with his natural timidity was too exhausting for him to be in a condition to observe anything outside himself. The quarter before ten had sounded from the tower clock, without his having yet ventured on anything. Julien, ashamed of his cowardice, told himself: ‘At the precise moment when ten o’clock strikes, I shall carry out the intention which, all day long, I have been promising myself that I would fulfil this evening, or I shall go up to my room and blow my brains out.’

After a final interval of tension and anxiety, during which the excess of his emotion carried Julien almost out of his senses, the strokes of ten sounded from the clock overhead. Each stroke of that fatal bell stirred an echo in his bosom, causing him almost a physical revulsion.

Finally, while the air was still throbbing with the last stroke of ten, he put out his hand and took that of Madame de Renal, who at once withdrew it. Julien, without exactly knowing what he was doing, grasped her hand again. Although greatly moved himself, he was struck by the icy coldness of the hand he was clasping; he pressed it with convulsive force; a last attempt was made to remove it from him, but finally the hand was left in his grasp.

His heart was flooded with joy, not because he loved Madame de Renal, but because a fearful torment was now at an end. So that Madame Derville should not notice anything, he felt himself obliged to speak; his voice, now,

was loud and ringing. Madame de Renal's, on the other hand, betrayed such emotion that her friend thought she must be ill and suggested to her that they should go indoors. Julien saw the danger: 'If Madame de Renal returns to the drawing-room, I am going to fall back into the horrible position I have been in all day. I have not held this hand long enough to be able to reckon it as a definite conquest.'

When Madame Derville repeated her suggestion that they should go into the drawing-room, Julien pressed the hand that lay in his.

Madame de Renal, who was preparing to rise, resumed her seat, saying in a faint tone:

'I do, as a matter of fact, feel a little unwell, but the fresh air is doing me good.'

These words confirmed Julien's happiness, which, at this moment, was extreme: he talked, forgot to dissimulate, appeared the most charming of men to his two hearers. And yet there was still a slight want of courage in this eloquence which had suddenly come to him. He was in a deadly fear lest Madame Derville, exhausted by the wind which was beginning to rise, and heralded the storm, might decide to go in by herself to the drawing-room. Then he would be left alone with Madame de Renal. He had found almost by accident the blind courage which was sufficient for action; but he felt that it lay beyond his power to utter the simplest of words to Madame de Renal. However mild her reproaches might be, he was going to be defeated, and the advantage which he had just gained wiped out.

Fortunately for him, this evening, his touching and emphatic speeches found favour with Madame Derville, who as a rule found him as awkward as a schoolboy, and by no means amusing. As for Madame de Renal, her hand lying clasped in Julien's, she had no thought of anything; she was allowing herself to live. The hours they spent beneath this huge lime, which, local tradition maintained, had been planted by Charles the Bold, were for her a time of happiness. She listened with rapture to the moaning of the wind in the thick foliage of the lime, and the sound of the first few drops that were beginning to fall upon its lowest leaves. Julien did not notice a detail which would have greatly reassured him; Madame de Renal, who had been obliged

to remove her hand from his, on rising to help her cousin to pick up a pot of flowers which the wind had overturned at their feet, had no sooner sat down again than she gave him back her hand almost without difficulty, and as though it had been an understood thing between them.

Midnight had long since struck; at length it was time to leave the garden: the party broke up. Madame de Renal, transported by the joy of being in love, was so ignorant that she hardly reproached herself at all. Happiness robbed her of sleep. A sleep like lead carried off Julien, utterly worn out by the battle that had been raging all day in his heart between timidity and pride.

Next morning he was called at five o'clock; and (what would have been a cruel blow to Madame de Renal had she known of it) he barely gave her a thought. He had done his duty, and a heroic duty. Filled with joy by this sentiment, he turned the key in the door of his bedroom and gave himself up with an entirely new pleasure to reading about the exploits of his hero.

When the luncheon bell sounded, he had forgotten, in reading the reports of the Grand Army, all the advantages he had won overnight. He said to himself, in a careless tone, as he went down to the drawing-room: 'I must tell this woman that I love her.'

Instead of that gaze charged with passion which he expected to meet, he found the stern face of M. de Renal, who, having arrived a couple of hours earlier from Verrieres, did not conceal his displeasure on finding that Julien was wasting the whole morning without attending to the children. No sight could have been so unprepossessing as that of this self-important man, conscious of a grievance and confident of his right to let it be seen.

Each of her husband's harsh words pierced Madame de Renal to the heart. As for Julien, he was so plunged in ecstasy, still so absorbed in the great events which for the last few hours had been happening before his eyes, that at first he could barely lower the pitch of his attention to listen to the stern voice of M. de Renal. At length he answered him, sharply enough:

'I was unwell.'

The tone of this reply would have stung a man far less susceptible than the Mayor of Verrieres; it occurred to him to reply to Julien with an immediate dismissal. He was restrained only by the maxim which he had laid down for himself, never to be too hasty in business matters.

‘This young fool,’ he soon reminded himself, ‘has made himself a sort of reputation in my house; Valenod may take him on, or else he will marry Elisa, and, in either case, he can afford to laugh at me in his heart.’

Despite the wisdom of these reflections, M. de Renal’s displeasure found an outlet nevertheless in a succession of coarse utterances which succeeded in irritating Julien. Madame de Renal was on the point of subsiding in tears. As soon as the meal was ended, she asked Julien to give her his arm for their walk; she leaned upon it in a friendly way. To all that Madame de Renal said to him, Julien could only murmur in reply:

‘This is what rich people are like!’

M. de Renal kept close beside them; his presence increased Julien’s anger. He noticed suddenly that Madame de Renal was leaning upon his arm in a marked manner; this action horrified him, he repulsed her violently, freeing his arm from hers.

Fortunately M. de Renal saw nothing of this fresh impertinence; it was noticed only by Madame Derville; her friend burst into tears. At this moment M. de Renal began flinging stones at a little peasant girl who was trespassing by taking a short cut across a corner of the orchard.

‘Monsieur Julien, kindly control yourself, remember that we are all of us liable to moments of ill temper,’ Madame Derville said hastily.

Julien looked at her coldly with eyes in which the loftiest contempt was portrayed.

This look astonished Madame Derville, and would have surprised her far more could she have guessed its full meaning; she would have read in it a vague hope of the most terrible revenge. It is doubtless to such moments of humiliation that we owe men like Robespierre.

‘Your Julien is very violent, he frightens me,’ Madame Derville murmured to her friend.

‘He has every reason to be angry,’ the other replied. ‘After the astonishing progress the children have made with him, what does it matter if he spends a morning without speaking to them? You must admit that gentlemen are very hard.’

For the first time in her life, Madame de Renal felt a sort of desire to be avenged on her husband. The intense hatred that animated Julien against rich people was about to break forth. Fortunately M. de Renal called for his gardener, with whom for the rest of the time he busied himself in stopping up with faggots of thorn the short cut that had been made across the orchard. Julien did not utter a single word in reply to the attentions that were shown him throughout the remainder of the walk. As soon as M. de Renal had left them, the two ladies, on the plea that they were tired, had asked him each for an arm.

As he walked between these women whose cheeks were flushed with the embarrassment of an intense discomfort, Julien’s sombre and decided air formed a striking contrast. He despised these women, and all tender feelings.

‘What!’ he said to himself, ‘not even an allowance of five hundred francs to complete my studies! Ah! How I should send her packing!’

Absorbed in these drastic thoughts, the little that he deigned to take in of the polite speeches of the two ladies displeased him as being devoid of meaning, silly, feeble, in a word feminine.

By dint of talking for talking’s sake, and of trying to keep the conversation alive, Madame de Renal found herself saying that her husband had come from Verrieres because he had made a bargain, for the purchase of maize straw, with one of his farmers. (In this district maize straw is used to stuff the palliasses of the beds.)

‘My husband will not be joining us again,’ Madame de Renal went on: ‘he will be busy with the gardener and his valet changing the straw in all the

palliasses in the house. This morning he put fresh straw on all the beds on the first floor, now he is at work on the second.'

Julien changed colour; he looked at Madame de Renal in an odd manner, and presently drew her apart, so to speak, by increasing his pace. Madame Derville allowed them to move away from her.

'Save my life,' said Julien to Madame de Renal, 'you alone can do it; for you know that the valet hates me like poison. I must confess to you, Ma'am, that I have a portrait; I have hidden it in the palliasse on my bed.'

At these words, Madame de Renal in turn grew pale.

'You alone, Ma'am, can go into my room at this moment; feel, without letting yourself be observed, in the corner of the palliasse nearest to the window; you will find there a small box of shiny black pasteboard.'

'It contains a portrait?' said Madame de Renal, barely able to stand.

Her air of disappointment was noticed by Julien, who at once took advantage of it.

'I have a second favour to ask of you, Ma'am; I beg you not to look at the portrait, it is my secret.'

'It is a secret!' repeated Madame de Renal, in faint accents.

But, albeit she had been reared among people proud of their wealth, and sensible of pecuniary interests alone, love had already instilled some generosity into her heart. Though cruelly wounded, it was with an air of the simplest devotion that Madame de Renal put to Julien the questions necessary to enable her to execute his commission properly.

'And so,' she said, as she left him, 'it is a little round box, of black pasteboard, and very shiny.'

'Yes, Ma'am,' replied Julien in that hard tone which danger gives a man.

She mounted to the second floor of the house, as pale as though she were going to her death. To complete her misery she felt that she was on the point of fainting, but the necessity of doing Julien a service restored her strength.

‘I must have that box,’ she said to herself as she quickened her pace.

She could hear her husband talking to the valet, actually in Julien’s room. Fortunately they moved into the room in which the children slept. She lifted the mattress and plunged her hand into the straw with such force as to scratch her fingers. But, although extremely sensitive to slight injuries of this sort, she was now quite unconscious of the pain, for almost immediately she felt the polished surface of the pasteboard box. She seized it and fled.

No sooner was she rid of the fear of being surprised by her husband, than the horror inspired in her by this box made her feel that in another minute she must unquestionably faint.

‘So Julien is in love, and I have here the portrait of the woman he loves.’

Seated on a chair in the sitting-room of this apartment, Madame de Renal fell a prey to all the horrors of jealousy. Her extreme ignorance was of service to her again at this moment; astonishment tempered her grief. Julien appeared, snatched the box, without thanking her, without saying a word, and ran into his bedroom, where he struck a light and immediately destroyed it. He was pale, speechless; he exaggerated to himself the risk he had been running.

‘The portrait of Napoleon,’ he said to himself with a toss of the head, ‘found hidden in the room of a man who professes such hatred for the usurper! Found by M. de Renal, so ultra and so angry! and, to complete the imprudence, on the white card at the back of the portrait, lines in my writing! And lines that can leave no doubt as to the warmth of my admiration! And each of those transports of love is dated! There was one only two days ago!

‘All my reputation brought down, destroyed in a moment!’ Julien said to himself as he watched the box burn, ‘and my reputation is all I have, I live by it alone . . . and what a life at that, great God!’

An hour later, his exhaustion and the pity he felt for himself disposed him to feel affection. He met Madame de Renal and took her hand which he kissed with more sincerity than he had ever yet shown. She coloured with delight, and almost simultaneously repulsed Julien with the anger of a jealous woman. Julien's pride, so recently wounded, made a fool of him at that moment. He saw in Madame de Renal only a rich woman, he let fall her hand with contempt, and strode away. He went out and walked pensively in the garden; presently a bitter smile appeared on his lips.

'Here I am walking about as calm as a man who is his own master! I am not looking after the children! I am exposing myself to the humiliating remarks of M. de Renal, and he will be justified.' He hastened to the children's room.

The caresses of the youngest boy, to whom he was greatly attached, did something to soothe his agonising pain.

'This one does not despise me yet,' thought Julien. But presently he blamed himself for this relief from pain, as for a fresh weakness. These children fondle me as they might fondle the puppy that was bought yesterday.'

Chapter 10

A Large Heart and a Small Fortune

But passion most dissembles, yet betrays, Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky Foretells the heaviest tempest.

Don Juan, I. 73

M. de Renal, who was visiting every room in the house, reappeared in the children's room with the servants who brought back the palliasses refilled. The sudden entry of this man was the last straw to Julien.

Paler, more sombre than usual, he advanced towards him. M. de Renal stood still and looked at his servants.

'Sir,' Julien began, 'do you suppose that with any other tutor your children would have made the same progress that they have made with me? If your answer is no,' he went on without giving M. de Renal time to speak, 'how dare you presume to reproach me with neglecting them?'

M. de Renal, who had barely recovered from his alarm, concluded from the strange tone which he saw this young peasant adopt that he had in his pocket some more attractive offer and was going to leave him. Julien's anger increasing as he spoke:

'I can live without you, Sir,' he concluded.

'I am extremely sorry to see you so agitated,' replied M. de Renal, stammering a little. The servants were a few feet away, and were occupied in making the beds.

‘That is not enough for me, Sir,’ Julien went on, beside himself with rage; ‘think of the abominable things you said to me, and in the presence of ladies, too!’

M. de Renal was only too well aware of what Julien was asking, and conflicting passions did battle in his heart. It so happened that Julien, now really mad with rage, exclaimed: ‘I know where to go, Sir, when I leave your house.’

On hearing these words, M. de Renal had a vision of Julien established in M. Valenod’s household.

‘Very well, Sir,’ he said at length with a sigh, and the air of a man calling in a surgeon to perform the most painful operation, ‘I agree to your request. From the day after tomorrow, which is the first of the month, I shall give you fifty francs monthly.’

Julien wanted to laugh and remained speechless: his anger had completely vanished.

‘I did not despise the animal enough,’ he said to himself. ‘This, no doubt, is the most ample apology so base a nature is capable of making.’

The children, who had listened to this scene open-mouthed, ran to the garden to tell their mother that M. Julien was in a great rage, but that he was to have fifty francs a month.

Julien went after them from force of habit, without so much as a glance at M. de Renal, whom he left in a state of intense annoyance.

‘That’s a hundred and sixty-eight francs,’ the Mayor said to himself, ‘that M. Valenod has cost me. I must really say a few firm words to him about his contract to supply the foundlings.’

A moment later, Julien again stood before him.

‘I have a matter of conscience to discuss with M. Chelan. I have the honour to inform you that I shall be absent for some hours.’

‘Ah, my dear Julien,’ said M. de Renal, laughing in the most insincere manner, ‘the whole day, if you wish, the whole of tomorrow, my worthy friend. Take the gardener’s horse to go to Verrieres.’

‘There,’ M. de Renal said to himself, ‘he’s going with an answer to Valenod; he’s given me no promise, but we must let the young hothead cool down.’

Julien made a speedy escape and climbed up among the big woods through which one can go from Vergy to Verrieres. He was in no hurry to reach M. Chelan’s. So far from desiring to involve himself in a fresh display of hypocrisy, he needed time to see clearly into his own heart, and to give audience to the swarm of conflicting feelings that disturbed it.

‘I have won a battle,’ he said to himself as soon as he found himself in the shelter of the woods and out of sight of anyone, ‘I have really won a battle!’

The last word painted his whole position for him in glowing colours, and restored some degree of tranquillity to his heart.

‘Here I am with a salary of fifty francs a month; M. de Renal must be in a fine fright. But of what?’

His meditation as to what could have frightened the prosperous and powerful man against whom, an hour earlier, he had been seething with rage completely restored Julien’s serenity. He was almost conscious, for a moment, of the exquisite beauty of the woods through which he was walking. Enormous fragments of bare rock had in times past fallen into the heart of the forest from the side of the mountain. Tall beeches rose almost as high as these rocks whose shadow provided a delicious coolness within a few yards of places where the heat of the sun’s rays would have made it impossible to stop.

Julien paused for a breathing-space in the shadow of these great rocks, then went on climbing. Presently, by following a narrow path, barely visible and used only by goatherds, he found himself standing upon an immense rock, where he could be certain of his complete isolation from his fellow-men. This natural position made him smile, it suggested to him the position to which he was burning to attain in the moral sphere. The pure air of these

lofty mountains breathed serenity and even joy into his soul. The Mayor of Verrieres might still, in his eyes, be typical of all the rich and insolent denizens of the earth, but Julien felt that the hatred which had convulsed him that afternoon contained, notwithstanding its violence, no element of personal ill-feeling. Should he cease to see M. de Renal, within a week he would have forgotten him, the man himself, his house, his dogs, his children and all that was his. 'I have forced him, I do not know how, to make the greatest of sacrifices. What, more than fifty crowns a year? A moment earlier I had just escaped from the greatest danger. That makes two victories in one day; the second contains no merit, I must try to discover the reason. But we can leave such arduous research for tomorrow.'

Julien, erect upon his mighty rock, gazed at the sky, kindled to flame by an August sun. The grasshoppers were chirping in the patch of meadow beneath the rock; when they ceased everything around him was silence. Twenty leagues of country lay at his feet. From time to time a hawk, risen from the bare cliffs above his head, caught his eye as it wheeled silently in its vast circles. Julien's eye followed mechanically the bird of prey. Its calm, powerful motion impressed him, he envied such strength, he envied such isolation.

It was the destiny of Napoleon, was it one day to be his own?

Chapter 11

Night Thoughts

Yet Julia's very coldness still was kind,

And tremulously gentle her small hand

Withdrew itself from his, but left behind

A little pressure, thrilling, and so bland

And slight, so very slight, that to the mind

Twas but a doubt.

Don Juan, I. 71

He must, however, let himself be seen at Verrieres. As he left the Presbytery the first person he met was, by a happy chance, M. Valenod, whom he hastened to inform of the increase in his salary.

On his return to Vergy, Julien did not go down to the garden until night had set in. His heart was worn out by the multitude of powerful emotions that had assailed it in the course of the day. 'What shall I say to them?' he asked himself anxiously, thinking of the ladies. It never occurred to him that his spirits were precisely at the level of the trivial happenings that as a rule occupy the whole interest of women. Often Julien was unintelligible to Madame Derville, and even to her friend, while he in turn only half understood all that they were saying to him. Such was the effect of the force, and, if I may use the word, of the magnitude of the waves of passion on

which the heart of this ambitious youth was being tossed. In this strange creature almost every day was one of storm.

When he went into the garden that evening, Julien was ready to listen with interest to the thoughts of the fair cousins. They awaited his coming with impatience. He took his accustomed seat, by Madame de Renal's side. The darkness soon became intense. He attempted to clasp a white hand which for some time he had seen close beside him, resting on the back of a chair. There was some hesitation shown, but finally the hand was withdrawn from him in a manner which betokened displeasure. Julien was prepared to regard this as final, and to continue the conversation in a light tone, when he heard M. de Renal approach.

The rude words of the morning still rang in Julien's ears. 'Would it not,' he said to himself, 'be a good way of scoring off this creature, so lavishly endowed with every material advantage, to take possession of his wife's hand under his very eyes? Yes, I will do it, I, for whom he has shown such contempt.'

>From that moment peace of mind, so ill assorted to Julien's character, speedily vanished; he desired most anxiously, and without being able to fix his mind on anything else, that Madame de Renal might consent to let him hold her hand.

M. de Renal talked politics in an angry tone: two or three manufacturers at Verrieres were becoming decidedly richer than himself, and wished to oppose him at the elections. Madame Derville listened to him. Julien, irritated by this talk, moved his chair nearer to Madame de Renal's. The darkness hid every movement. He ventured to place his hand close to the pretty arm which her gown left bare. Troubled, no longer conscious of what he was doing, he moved his cheek in the direction of this pretty arm, and made bold to press his lips to it.

Madame de Renal shuddered. Her husband was a few feet away, she hastened to give Julien her hand, at the same time thrusting him slightly from her. While M. de Renal continued his abuse of the good-for-nothings and Jacobins who were making fortunes, Julien covered the hand which had been left in his with passionate kisses, or so at least they seemed to Madame

de Renal. And yet the poor woman had been furnished with proof, on this fatal day, that the heart of the man whom she adored without confessing it was pledged elsewhere! Throughout the hours of Julien's absence, she had been a prey to the most abject misery, which had made her think.

'What,' she said to herself, 'am I to love, to have love offered to me? Am I, a married woman, to fall in love? But,' she reminded herself, 'I have never felt that dark passion for my husband, and so I cannot tear my mind from Julien. At heart he is only a boy filled with respect for me! This folly will pass. How can it concern my husband what feelings I may entertain for this young man? M. de Renal would be bored by the talks I have with Julien, about things of the imagination. He himself thinks only about his business. I am taking nothing from him to give to Julien.'

No trace of hypocrisy came to sully the purity of this simple soul, carried away by a passion such as she had never felt. She was deceived, but quite unawares, and at the same time a virtuous instinct had taken alarm. Such were the conflicts that were agitating her when Julien appeared in the garden. She heard his voice, almost at the same moment she saw him sit down by her side. Her heart was so to speak carried away by this charming happiness which for the last fortnight had astonished even more than it had bewitched her. Everything was unexpected to her. And yet after a few moments: 'So Julien's presence is enough,' she said to herself, 'to wipe out all memory of his misconduct?' She took fright; then it was that she withdrew her hand from his.

His kisses, filled with passion and such as she had never yet received, made her at once forget the possibility of his loving another woman. Soon he was no longer guilty in her eyes. The cessation of her poignant grief, born of suspicion, the presence of a happiness of which she had never even dreamed, plunged her in transports of affection and wild gaiety. That evening was delightful for them all, except for the Mayor of Verrieres, who could not forget the growing wealth of his competitors. Julien no longer thought of his dark ambition, nor of his plans that would be so difficult of execution. For the first time in his life, he was carried away by the power of beauty. Lost in a vague and pleasant dream, so foreign to his nature, gently pressing that hand which pleased him as an example of perfect beauty, he gave a divided

attention to the rustle of the leaves of the lime, stirred by the gentle night breeze, and to the dogs at the mill by the Doubs, barking in the distance.

But this emotion was a pleasure and not a passion. On returning to his room he thought of one happiness only, that of going on with his favourite book; at twenty, the thought of the world and of the impression one is going to make on it, prevails over everything else.

Presently, however, he put down the book. By dint of dreaming of Napoleon's victories, he had discerned a new element in his own. 'Yes, I have won a battle,' he told himself, 'but I must follow it up, I must crush the arrogance of this proud gentleman while he is still retreating. That is Napoleon out and out. I must ask him for three days' holiday, to go and see my friend Fouque. If he refuses, I again offer to break the agreement; but he will give way.'

Madame de Renal could not close an eye. She felt that she had never lived until that moment. She could not tear her mind from the happiness of feeling Julien cover her hand with burning kisses.

Suddenly the horrid word adultery occurred to her. All the most disgusting implications that the vilest debauchery can impart to the idea of sensual love came crowding into her imagination. These ideas sought to tarnish the tender and godlike image that she had made for herself of Julien and of the pleasure of loving him. The future portrayed itself in terrible colours. She saw herself an object of scorn.

It was a frightful moment; her soul journeyed into strange lands. That evening she had tasted an unknown happiness; now she suddenly found herself plunged in appalling misery. She had no conception of such sufferings; they began to affect her reason. The thought occurred to her for a moment of confessing to her husband that she was afraid of falling in love with Julien. It would have allowed her to speak of him. Fortunately she recalled a piece of advice given her long ago by her aunt, on the eve of her marriage. It warned her of the danger of confiding in a husband, who is after all a master. In the intensity of her grief she wrung her hands.

She was carried away indiscriminately by conflicting and painful imaginings. At one moment she was afraid of not being loved in return, at another the fearful thought of the crime tortured her as though on the morrow she would have to be exposed in the pillory, on the public square of Verrieres, with a placard proclaiming her adultery to the populace.

Madame de Renal was without any experience of life; even when wide awake and in the full exercise of her reason, she would have seen no distinction between being guilty in the sight of God and finding herself publicly greeted with all the most flagrant marks of general opprobrium.

When the frightful idea of adultery and of all the ignominy which (she supposed) that crime brings in its train gave her at length a respite, and she began to dream of the delight of living with Julien innocently, as in the past, she found herself swept away by the horrible thought that Julien was in love with another woman. She saw once again his pallor when he was afraid of losing her portrait, or of compromising her by letting it be seen. For the first time, she had surprised signs of fear on that calm and noble countenance. Never had he shown himself in such a state for her or for her children. This additional grief carried her to the utmost intensity of anguish which the human soul is able to endure. Unconsciously, Madame de Renal uttered cries which roused her maid. Suddenly she saw appear by her bedside the light of a lamp, and recognised Elisa.

‘Is it you that he loves?’ she cried in her frenzy.

The maid, amazed at the fearful distress in which she found her mistress, paid no attention fortunately to this singular utterance. Madame de Renal realised her own imprudence: ‘I am feverish,’ she told her, ‘and I think, a little light-headed; stay beside me.’

Thoroughly awakened by the necessity of controlling herself, she felt less wretched; reason resumed the sway of which her state of drowsiness had deprived it. To escape from the fixed stare of her maid, she ordered her to read the newspaper aloud, and it was to the monotonous sound of the girl’s voice, reading a long article from the Quotidienne, that Madame de Renal formed the virtuous resolution to treat Julien with absolute coldness when next she saw him.

Chapter 12

A Journey

In Paris you find elegant people, there may be people with character in the provinces.

SIEYES

Next morning, at five o'clock, before Madame de Renal was visible, Julien had obtained from her husband three days' leave of absence. Contrary to his expectation, Julien found himself longing to see her again, and could think of nothing but that shapely hand. He went down to the garden, Madame de Renal was long in coming. But if Julien had been in love with her he would have seen her, behind her half-closed shutters on the first floor, her face pressed to the glass. She was watching him. At length, in spite of her resolutions, she decided to show herself in the garden. Her customary pallor had given place to the most glowing colour. This simple-minded woman was evidently agitated: a feeling of constraint and even of resentment marred that expression of profound serenity, as though raised above all the common interests of life, which gave such charm to that heavenly face.

Julien lost no time in joining her; he admired those fine arms which a shawl flung in haste across her shoulders left visible. The coolness of the morning air seemed to increase the brilliance of a complexion which the agitation of the past night made all the more sensible to every impression. This beauty, modest and touching, and yet full of thoughts which are nowhere to be found among the lower orders, seemed to reveal to Julien an aspect of her nature of which he had never yet been aware. Wholly absorbed in admiration of the charms which his greedy eye surprised, Julien was not thinking of the friendly greeting which he might expect to receive. He was all the more

astonished by the icy coldness that was shown him, beneath which he even thought he could make out a deliberate intention to put him in his place.

The smile of pleasure faded from his lips; he remembered the rank that he occupied in society, especially in the eyes of a noble and wealthy heiress. In a moment, his features showed nothing but pride and anger with himself. He felt a violent disgust at having been so foolish as to postpone his departure by more than an hour, only to receive so humiliating a greeting.

'Only a fool,' he told himself, 'loses his temper with other people: a stone falls because it is heavy. Am I always to remain a boy? When am I going to form the good habit of giving these people their exact money's worth and no more of my heart and soul? If I wish to be esteemed by them and by myself, I must show them that it is my poverty that deals with their wealth, but that my heart is a thousand leagues away from their insolence, and is placed in too exalted a sphere to be reached by their petty marks of contempt or favour.'

While these sentiments came crowding into the young tutor's mind, his features assumed an expression of injured pride and ferocity. Madame de Renal was greatly distressed by this. The virtuous coldness which she had meant to impart to her greeting gave way to an expression of interest, and of an interest animated by the surprise of the sudden change which she had just beheld in him. The flow of idle words that people exchange in the morning with regard to one another's health, to the beauty of the day, and so forth, dried up at once in them both. Julien, whose judgment was not disturbed by any passion, soon found a way of letting Madame de Renal see how little he regarded himself as being on terms of friendship with her; he said nothing to her of the little expedition on which he was starting, bowed to her, and set off.

As she watched him go, overwhelmed by the sombre pride which she read in that glance, so friendly the evening before, her eldest son, who came running up from the other end of the garden, said to her as he embraced her:

'We have a holiday, M. Julien is going on a journey.'

At these words Madame de Renal felt herself frozen by a deadly chill; she was unhappy in her virtue, and more unhappy still in her weakness.

This latest development now occupied the whole of her imagination; she was carried far beyond the wise resolutions which were the fruit of the terrible night she had passed. It was a question no longer of resisting this charming lover, but of losing him for ever.

She was obliged to take her place at table. To add to her misery, M. de Renal and Madame Derville spoke of nothing but Julien's departure. The Mayor of Verrieres had remarked something, unusual in the firm tone with which he had demanded a holiday.

'The young peasant has doubtless an offer from someone in his pocket. But that someone, even if it should be M. Valenod, must be a little discouraged by the sum of 600 francs, which he must now be prepared to spend annually. Yesterday, at Verrieres, he will have asked for three days in which to think things over; and this morning, so as not to be obliged to give me an answer, the young gentleman goes off to the mountains. To have to reckon with a wretched workman who puts on airs, that's what we've come to!'

'Since my husband, who does not know how deeply he has wounded Julien, thinks he is going to leave us, what am I to suppose?' Madame de Renal asked herself. 'Ah! It is all settled!'

So as to be able at least to weep in freedom, and without having to answer Madame Derville's questions, she pleaded a splitting headache, and retired to bed.

'There you have a woman all over,' M. de Renal repeated; 'there's always something wrong with those complicated machines.' And he went on his way jeering.

While Madame de Renal was at the mercy of the most cruel inflictions of the terrible passion into which accident had led her, Julien was making his way light-heartedly amid the loveliest views that mountain scenery has to offer. He was obliged to pass over the high range to the north of Vergy. The path which he followed, rising gradually amid great beechwoods, forms an

endless series of zigzags on the side of the high mountain which bounds the valley of the Doubs on the north. Presently the traveller's gaze, passing over the lower ridges which confine the course of the Doubs on the south, was able to sweep the fertile plains of Burgundy and Beaujolais. Irresponsive as the heart of this ambitious youth might be to this kind of beauty, he could not refrain from stopping now and again to gaze at so vast and so imposing a prospect.

At length he came to the summit of the high mountain, beneath which he must pass in order to arrive, by this diagonal route, at the lonely valley in which his friend Fouque, the young timber merchant, lived. Julien was in no hurry to see him, or any other human being for that matter. Concealed like a bird of prey, amid the bare rocks which crowned the high mountain, he could see a long way off anyone that might be coming his way. He discovered a small cave in the almost perpendicular face of one of the rocks. He set his course for it, and presently was ensconced in this retreat. 'Here,' he said, his eyes sparkling with joy, 'men can do me no harm.' It occurred to him to indulge in the pleasure of writing down his thoughts, so dangerous to him in any other place. A smooth block of stone served as his table. His pen flew: he saw nothing of the scene round about him. At length he noticed that the sun was setting behind the distant mountains of Beaujolais.

'Why should I not spend the night here?' he asked himself; 'I have bread, and I am free!' At the sound of that great word his heart leaped, his hypocrisy meant that he was not free even with Fouque. His head supported on both his hands, Julien stayed in this cave happier than he had ever been in his life, engrossed in his dreams and in the joy of freedom. Without heeding it he saw fade and die, one after another, the last rays of evening light. In the midst of that vast darkness, his soul wandered in contemplation of what he imagined that he would one day find in Paris. This was first and foremost a woman far more beautiful and of a far higher intelligence than any it had been his lot to see in the country. He loved with passion, he was loved in return. If he tore himself from her for a few moments, it was to cover himself with glory and earn the right to be loved more warmly still.

Even if we allow him Julien's imagination, a young man brought up among the melancholy truths of Paris would have been aroused at this stage in his romance by the cold touch of irony; the mighty deeds would have vanished

with the hope of performing them, to give place to the well-known maxim: ‘When a man leaves his mistress, he runs the risk of being betrayed two or three times daily.’ The young peasant saw no obstacle between himself and the most heroic actions, save want of opportunity.

But black night had succeeded the day, and he had still two leagues to cover before coming down to the hamlet in which Fouque lived. Before leaving the little cave, Julien struck a light and carefully destroyed all that he had written.

He greatly astonished his friend by knocking at his door at one o’clock in the morning. He found Fouque engaged in making up his accounts. He was a young man of tall stature, none too well made, with large, hard features, a huge nose, and plenty of good nature concealed beneath this repellent aspect.

‘You’ve quarrelled with your M. de Renal, then, that you come here of a sudden like this?’

Julien related to him, with suitable omissions, the events of the previous evening.

‘Stay with me,’ Fouque said to him; ‘I see that you know M. de Renal, M. Valenod, the Sub–Prefect Maugiron, the cure Chelan; you have grasped all the subtle points of their natures; you’re ripe now to put yourself up for auction. You know arithmetic better than I do, you shall keep my books; I am making a big profit from my business. The impossibility of doing everything by myself and the fear of hitting upon a rogue in the man I might take as my partner prevent me every day from doing the most profitable deals. Not a month ago I put six thousand francs in the pocket of Michaud of Saint–Amand, whom I had not seen for six years, and met quite by chance at the Pontarlier sale. Why should not you have made those six thousand francs yourself, or three thousand at least? For if I had had you with me that day, I should have gone on bidding for that lot of timber, and the other would soon have left me with it. Be my partner.’

This offer annoyed Julien; it unsettled his erratic mind; throughout supper, which the friends cooked for themselves, like Homeric heroes, for Fouque lived by himself, he showed Julien his books, and proved to him what

advantages his trade in timber offered. Fouque had the highest opinion of Julien's intelligence and character.

When at length the latter found himself alone in his little room walled with planks of firwood, 'It is true,' he said to himself, 'I can make a few thousand francs here, then return with advantage to the calling of soldier or priest, according to the fashion prevailing in France at the time. The little hoard that I shall have amassed will remove all difficulties of detail. Alone on this mountainside, I can do something to dispel my present appalling ignorance of so many of the things that occupy the minds of all these fashionable gentlemen. But Fouque is giving up the thought of marriage, he has told me again and again that solitude is making him melancholy. It is obvious that if he is taking a partner who has no money to put into his business, it is in the hope of providing himself with a companion who will never leave him.

'Shall I prove false to my friend?' exclaimed Julien angrily. This creature, for whom hypocrisy and the absence of all fellow feeling were the ordinary line of conduct, could not on this occasion bear the thought of the slightest want of delicacy towards a man who loved him.

But all at once Julien became happy, he had a reason for refusing. 'What, I should be idly wasting seven or eight years! I should thus arrive at eight and twenty; but, at that age, Napoleon had already done his greatest deeds! After I have obscurely scraped together a little money by going round all these timber sales, and winning the favour of various minor rascals, who can say whether I shall still preserve the sacred fire with which one makes oneself a name?'

The following morning, Julien replied with great coolness to the worthy Fouque, who looked upon the matter of their partnership as settled, that his vocation to the sacred ministry of the altar did not allow him to accept. Fouque could not believe his ears.

'But do you realise,' he kept on saying, 'that I make you my partner, or, if you prefer, give you four thousand francs a year? And you want to go back to your M. de Renal, who despises you like the mud on his shoes! When you have two hundred louis in hand, what is to prevent you from entering the Seminary? I will say more, I undertake to procure for you the best parish in

the district. For,' Fouque went on, lowering his voice, 'I supply firewood to the —— , and the —— , and M. —— . I give them the best quality of oak, for which they pay me the price of white wood, but never was money better invested.'

Nothing could prevail against Julien's vocation. In the end Fouque decided that he must be slightly mad. On the third day, at dawn, Julien left his friend to pass the day among the rocks of the big mountain. He found his little cave again, but he no longer enjoyed peace of mind, his friend's offers had destroyed it. Like Hercules he found himself called upon to choose not between vice and virtue, but between mediocrity ending in an assured comfort and all the heroic dreams of his youth. 'So I have no real firmness of character,' he told himself; and this was the doubt that pained him most. 'I am not of the stuff of which great men are made, since I am afraid that eight years spent in providing myself with bread may rob me of that sublime energy which makes men do extraordinary things.'

Chapter 13

Open-work Stockings

A novel is a mirror taken along a road.

SAINT-REAL

When Julien caught sight of the picturesque ruins of the old church of Vergy, it occurred to him that for two whole days he had not once thought of Madame de Renal. The other day, as I was leaving, that woman reminded me of the vast gulf that separates us, she treated me like a workman's son. No doubt she wished to show me that she repented of having let me hold her hand the night before . . . It is a lovely hand, all the same! What charm, what nobility dwells in that woman's glance!'

The possibility of making a fortune with Fouque gave a certain facility to the course of Julien's reasoning; it was less often interrupted by irritation, and the keen sense of his own poverty and humble position in the eyes of the world. As though perched on a lofty promontory, he was able to judge, and, so to speak, overlooked extreme poverty on the one hand and that life of comfort which he still called riches on the other. He was far from considering his position like a philosopher, but he had sufficient perception to feel that he was different after this little expedition among the mountains.

He was struck by the extreme uneasiness with which Madame de Renal listened to the short account of his journey, for which she had asked him.

Fouque had had thoughts of marriage, unhappy love affairs; the conversation between the friends had been filled with long confidences of this nature. After finding happiness too soon, Fouque had discovered that he was not the

sole possessor of his mistress's heart. These disclosures had astonished Julien; he had learned much that was new to him. His solitary life, compounded of imagination and suspicion, had kept him aloof from everything that could have enlightened him.

During his absence, life had been for Madame de Renal nothing more than a succession of torments, each different but all alike intolerable; she was really ill.

'You must not, on any account,' Madame Derville told her when she saw Julien return, 'feeling as you do, sit in the garden this evening, the damp air would make you worse.'

Madame Derville was surprised to see that her friend, who was always being scolded by M. de Renal for the undue simplicity of her attire, had put on open-work stockings and a pair of charming little shoes that had arrived from Paris. For the last three days Madame de Renal's sole distraction had been to cut out and make Elisa put together in all haste a summer gown, of a charming little fabric greatly in fashion. It was just possible to finish this gown a few minutes after Julien's arrival; Madame de Renal at once put it on. Her friend had no longer any doubt.

'She is in love, poor woman!' Madame Derville said to herself. She understood all the strange symptoms of her illness.

She saw her speak to Julien. Pallor took the place of the most vivid blushes. Anxiety stood revealed in her eyes, fastened on those of the young tutor. Madame de Renal expected every moment that he was going to offer an explanation, and announce that he was leaving the house, or would remain. It never occurred to Julien to say anything about this subject, which had not entered his thoughts. After a terrible struggle, Madame de Renal at last ventured to say to him, in a tremulous voice, in which the whole extent of her passion lay revealed:

'Are you going to leave your pupils to take a post elsewhere?'

Julien was struck by her quavering voice and by the look in her eyes. 'This woman loves me,' he said to himself; 'but after this passing weakness for

which her pride is reproaching her, and as soon as she is no longer afraid of my going, she will return to her arrogance.' This glimpse of their respective positions came to Julien like a flash of lightning; he replied, hesitatingly:

'I should greatly regret leaving such attractive and well-born children, but perhaps it will be inevitable. A man has duties towards himself also.'

As he uttered the words well born (this was one of the aristocratic expressions which Julien had recently acquired), he burned with a strong feeling of antipathy.

'To this woman,' he said to himself, 'I am not well born.'

Madame de Renal, as she listened to him, was admiring his intelligence, his beauty, her heart was pierced by the possibility of departure which he dangled before her. All her friends from Verrieres who, during Julien's absence, had come out to dine at Vergy, had almost vied in complimenting her upon the astonishing young man that her husband had had the good fortune to unearth. This was not to say that they understood anything of the progress that the children had made. The fact of his knowing the Bible by heart, and in Latin, too, had provoked in the inhabitants of Verrieres an admiration that will endure for, it may be, a century.

Julien, who spoke to no one, knew nothing of all this. If Madame de Renal had had the slightest self-control, she would have congratulated him on the reputation he had won, and Julien, his pride set at rest, would have been pleasant and affable to her, all the more as her new gown seemed to him charming. Madame de Renal, also pleased with her pretty gown, and with what Julien said to her about it, had proposed a turn in the garden; soon she had confessed that she was not well enough to walk. She had taken the returned traveller's arm, and, far from restoring her strength, the contact of that arm deprived her of what little strength remained to her.

It was dark; no sooner were they seated than Julien, relying on the privilege he had already won, ventured to press his lips to the arm of his pretty neighbour, and to take her hand. He was thinking of the boldness which Fouque had used with his mistresses, and not of Madame de Renal; the phrase well born still weighed upon his heart. His own hand was pressed, but

this afforded him no pleasure. Far from his being proud, or even grateful for the affection which Madame de Renal betrayed this evening by unmistakable signs, beauty, elegance, freshness found him almost unconscious of their appeal. Purity of heart, freedom from any feeling of hatred, serve doubtless to prolong the duration of youth. It is the face that ages first in the majority of beautiful women.

Julien was sullen all the evening; hitherto he had been angry only with fortune and with society; now that Fouque had offered him an ignoble way of arriving at comfort, he was angry with himself. Absorbed in his own thoughts, although now and then he addressed a few words to the ladies, Julien ended by unconsciously letting go Madame de Renal's hand. This action completely nonplussed the poor woman; she saw in it an indication of her fate.

Had she been certain of Julien's affection, her virtue might perhaps have found strength to resist him. Trembling at the thought of losing him for ever, her passion carried her to the point of seizing Julien's hand, which, in his distraction, he had allowed to rest upon the back of a chair. This action stirred the ambitious youth; he would have liked it to be witnessed by all those proud nobles who, at table, when he was at the lower end with the children, used to look at him with so patronising a smile. 'This woman cannot despise me any longer: in that case,' he said to himself, 'I ought to be stirred by her beauty; I owe it to myself to be her lover.' Such an idea would never have occurred to him before he received the artless confidences of his friend.

The sudden resolution he had just made formed a pleasing distraction. He said to himself: 'I must have one of these two women'; he realised that he would greatly have preferred to pay his court to Madame Derville; it was not that she was more attractive, but she had seen him always as a tutor honoured for his learning, and not as a working carpenter, with a ratteen jacket folded under his arm, as he had first appeared to Madame de Renal.

It was precisely as a young workman, blushing to the whites of his eyes, hesitating outside the door of the house and not venturing to ring the bell, that Madame de Renal delighted most to picture him.

As he followed up this survey of his position, Julien saw that he must not think of attempting the conquest of Madame Derville, who had probably noticed the weakness that Madame de Renal showed for him. Forced to return to the latter: ‘What do I know of this woman’s character?’ Julien asked himself. ‘Only this: before I went away, I took her hand, she withdrew it; today I withdraw my hand, she seizes it and presses it. A good opportunity to repay her all the contempt she has shown for me. God knows how many lovers she has had! Perhaps she is deciding in my favour only because of the facilities for our meeting.’

Such is, alas, the drawback of an excessive civilisation. At the age of twenty, the heart of a young man, if he has any education, is a thousand leagues from that devil-may-care attitude without which love is often only the most tedious duty.

‘I owe it to myself all the more,’ went on Julien’s petty vanity, ‘to succeed with this woman, so that if I ever make my fortune, and someone reproaches me with having filled the humble post of tutor, I may let it be understood that it was love that brought me into that position.’

Julien once more withdrew his hand from that of Madame de Renal, then took her hand again and pressed it. As they returned to the drawing-room, towards midnight, Madame de Renal murmured in his ear:

‘Are you leaving us, are you going away?’

Julien answered with a sigh:

‘I must indeed go away, for I love you passionately; it is a sin . . . and what a sin for a young priest!’

Madame de Renal leaned upon his arm, bending towards him until her cheek felt the warmth of his.

The night passed for these two people very differently. Madame de Renal was exalted by transports of the most lofty moral pleasure. A coquettish girl who falls in love early grows accustomed to the distress of love; when she comes to the age of true passion, the charm of novelty is lacking. As Madame de Renal had never read any novels, all the refinements of her

happiness were new to her. No melancholy truth came to freeze her heart, not even the spectre of the future. She saw herself as happy in ten years' time as she was at that moment. Even the thought of virtue and of the fidelity she had vowed to M. de Renal, which had distressed her some days before, presented itself in vain, she dismissed it like an importunate stranger. 'Never will I allow Julien to take any liberty,' Madame de Renal told herself, 'we shall live in future as we have been living for the last month. He shall be a friend.'

Chapter 14

The English Scissors

A girl of sixteen had a rosy complexion, and put on rouge.

POLIDORI

As for Julien, Fouque's offer had indeed destroyed all his happiness; he could not decide upon any course.

'Alas! Perhaps I am wanting in character, I should have made Napoleon a bad soldier. Anyhow,' he went on, 'my little intrigue with the lady of the house is going to distract me for the moment.'

Fortunately for him, even in this minor incident, his inward feelings bore no relation to his cavalier language. He was afraid of Madame de Renal because of her pretty gown. This gown was in his eyes the advance guard of Paris. His pride was determined to leave nothing to chance and to the inspiration of the moment. Drawing upon Fouque's confessions and the little he had read about love in the Bible, he prepared a plan of campaign in great detail. Since, though he did not admit it to himself, he was extremely anxious, he committed this plan to writing.

The following morning, in the drawing-room, Madame de Renal was alone with him for a moment.

'Have you no other name besides Julien?' she asked him.

Our hero did not know what answer to give to so flattering a question. No provision had been made in his plan for such an event. But for the stupid

mistake of making a plan, Julien's quick mind would soon have come to his rescue, his surprise would only have added to the keenness of his perceptions.

He was awkward and exaggerated his own awkwardness. Madame de Renal soon forgave him that. She saw in it the effect of a charming candour. And the one thing lacking, to her mind, in this man, who was considered so brilliant, was an air of candour.

'I don't at all trust your little tutor,' Madame Derville said to her on several occasions. 'He seems to me to be always thinking and to act only from motives of policy. He's crafty.'

Julien remained deeply humiliated by the disaster of not having known what answer to make to Madame de Renal.

'A man of my sort owes it to himself to make up for this check'; and, seizing the moment at which she passed from one room to another, he did what he considered his duty by giving Madame de Renal a kiss.

Nothing could have been less appropriate, less agreeable either to himself or to her, nor could anything have been more imprudent. They barely escaped being caught. Madame de Renal thought him mad. She was frightened and even more shocked. This stupidity reminded her of M. Valenod.

'What would happen to me,' she asked herself, 'if I were left alone with him?' All her virtue returned, for her love was in eclipse.

She arranged matters so that there should always be one of her children with her.

The day passed slowly for Julien, he spent the whole of it in clumsily carrying out his plan of seduction. He never once looked at Madame de Renal without embodying a question in his look; he was not, however, such a fool as not to see that he was failing completely to be agreeable, let alone seductive.

Madame de Renal could not get over her astonishment at finding him so awkward and at the same time so bold. 'It is the timidity of love in a man of

parts!' she said to herself at length, with an inexpressible joy. 'Can it be possible that he has never been loved by my rival!'

After luncheon, Madame de Renal returned to the drawing-room to entertain M. Charcot de Maugiron, the Sub–Prefect of Bray. She was working at a little tapestry frame on a tall stand. Madame Derville was by her side. It was in this position, and in the full light of day, that our hero thought fit to thrust forward his boot and press the pretty foot of Madame de Renal, whose open-work stocking and smart Parisian shoe were evidently attracting the gaze of the gallant Sub–Prefect.

Madame de Renal was extremely alarmed; she let fall her scissors, her ball of wool, her needles, and Julien's movement could thus pass for a clumsy attempt to prevent the fall of the scissors, which he had seen slipping down. Fortunately these little scissors of English steel broke, and Madame de Renal could not sufficiently express her regret that Julien had not been nearer at hand.

'You saw them falling before I did, you might have caught them; your zeal has only succeeded in giving me a violent kick.'

All this play-acting took in the Sub–Prefect, but not Madame Derville. 'This pretty youth has very bad manners!' she thought; the worldly-wisdom of a provincial capital can never pardon mistakes of this sort. Madame de Renal found an opportunity of saying to Julien:

'Be careful, I order you.'

Julien realised his own clumsiness, and was annoyed. For a long time he debated within himself whether he ought to take offence at the words: 'I order you.' He was foolish enough to think: 'She might say to me "I order you" if it was something to do with the children's education; but in responding to my love, she assumes equality. One cannot love without equality'; and he lost himself in composing commonplaces on the subject of equality. He repeated angrily to himself the verse of Corneille which Madame Derville had taught him a few days earlier:

Love creates equalities, it does not seek them.

Julien, insisting upon playing the part of a Don Juan, he who had never had a mistress in his life, was deadly dull for the rest of the day. He had only one sensible idea; bored with himself and with Madame de Renal, he saw with alarm the evening approach when he would be seated in the garden, by her side and in the dark. He told M. de Renal that he was going to Verrieres to see the cure; he set off after dinner, and did not return until late at night.

At Verrieres, Julien found M. Chelan engaged in packing up; he had at last been deprived of his benefice; the vicar Maslon was to succeed him. Julien helped the good cure, and it occurred to him to write to Fouque that the irresistible vocation which he felt for the sacred ministry had prevented him at first from accepting his friend's obliging offer, but that he had just witnessed such an example of injustice, that perhaps it would be more advantageous to his welfare were he not to take holy orders.

Julien applauded his own deftness in making use of the deprivation of the cure of Verrieres to leave a door open for himself and so return to commerce, should the sad voice of prudence prevail, in his mind, over heroism.

Chapter 15

Cock-crow

Amour en latin faict amor; Or done provient d'amour la mort, Et, par avant, soulcy qui mord, Deuil, plours, pieges, forfaitz, remord . ..

Blason d'amour

If Julien had had a little of that discernment which he so gratuitously supposed himself to possess, he might have congratulated himself next day on the effect produced by his visit to Verrieres. His absence had caused his clumsiness to be forgotten. All that day too, he was inclined to sulk; towards nightfall a preposterous idea occurred to him, and he imparted it to Madame de Renal with a rare intrepidity.

No sooner had they sat down in the garden than, without waiting for a sufficient cloak of darkness, Julien put his lips to Madame de Renal's ear, and, at the risk of compromising her horribly, said to her:

'Tonight, Ma'am, at two o'clock, I am coming to your room, I have something to say to you.'

Julien was trembling lest his request should be granted; the part of a seducer was so horrible a burden that if he had been free to follow his own inclination, he would have retired to his room for some days, and not set eyes on the ladies again. He realised that, by his clever tactics of yesterday, he had squandered all the promise of the day before, and really he did not know where to turn.

Madame de Renal replied with a genuine and by no means exaggerated indignation to the impertinent announcement which Julien had had the audacity to make. He thought he could read scorn in her brief answer. It was certain that in this answer, uttered in the lowest of tones, the word ‘Fie!’ had figured. Making the excuse that he had something to say to the children, Julien went up to their room, and on his return placed himself by the side of Madame Derville and at a distance from Madame de Renal. He thus removed from himself all possibility of taking her hand. The conversation took a serious turn, and Julien held his own admirably, apart from a few intervals of silence during which he cudgelled his brains. ‘Why cannot I think of some fine plan,’ he asked himself, ‘to force Madame de Renal to show me those unmistakable marks of affection which made me imagine, three days ago, that she was mine!’

Julien was extremely disconcerted by the almost desperate situation into which he had been led. And yet nothing could have embarrassed him so much as success.

When the party broke up at midnight, his pessimism led him to believe that Madame Derville looked upon him with contempt, and that probably he stood no higher in the favour of Madame de Renal.

Being in an extremely bad temper and deeply humiliated, Julien could not sleep. He was a thousand leagues from any thought of abandoning all pretence, all his plans, and of living from day to day with Madame de Renal, contenting himself like a child with the happiness that each day would bring.

He wearied his brain in devising clever stratagems; a moment later, he felt them to be absurd; he was in short extremely wretched, when two struck from the clock tower.

This sound aroused him as the crow of the cock aroused Saint Peter. He saw himself arrived at the moment of the most distressing event. He had not thought once again of his impertinent suggestion, from the moment in which he had made it. It had met with so hostile a reception!

‘I told her that I should come to her at two o’clock,’ he said to himself as he rose; ‘I may be inexperienced and coarse, as is natural in the son of a

peasant, Madame Derville has let me see that plainly enough; but at any rate I will not be weak.'

Julien had every right to praise his own courage, never had he set himself a more painful task. As he opened the door of his room, he trembled so much that his knees gave way beneath him, and he was obliged to lean against the wall.

He was in his stockinged feet. He went to listen at M. de Renal's door, through which he could hear him snoring. This dismayed him. He had no longer any excuse for not going to her. But, great God! What should he do when he got there? He had no plan, and even if he had had one, he was in such distress of mind that he would not have been in a fit state to put it into practice.

Finally, with an anguish a thousand times keener than if he had been going to the scaffold, he entered the little corridor that led to Madame de Renal's room. He opened the door with a trembling hand, making a fearful noise as he did so.

There was a light in the room, a night light was burning in the fireplace; he had not expected this fresh calamity. Seeing him enter, Madame de Renal sprang quickly out of bed. 'Wretch!' she cried. There was some confusion. Julien forgot his futile plans and returned to his own natural character. Not to please so charming a woman seemed to him the greatest disaster possible. His only answer to her reproaches was to fling himself at her feet, clasping her round the knees. As she spoke to him with extreme harshness, he burst into tears.

Some hours later, when Julien emerged from Madame de Renal's room, one might have said, in the language of romance, that there was nothing more left for him to wish. And indeed, he was indebted to the love he had inspired and to the unforeseen impression made on him by her seductive charms for a victory to which not all his misplaced ingenuity would ever have led him.

But, in the most delicious moments, the victim of a freakish pride, he still attempted to play the part of a man in the habit of captivating women: he made incredible efforts to destroy his natural amiability. Instead of his

paying attention to the transports which he excited, and to the remorse that increased their vivacity, the idea of duty was continually before his eyes. He feared a terrible remorse, and undying ridicule, should he depart from the ideal plan that he had set himself to follow. In a word, what made Julien a superior being was precisely what prevented him from enjoying the happiness that sprang up at his feet. He was like a girl of sixteen who has a charming complexion and, before going to a ball, is foolish enough to put on rouge.

In mortal terror at the apparition of Julien, Madame de Renal was soon a prey to the cruellest alarms. Julien's tears and despair distressed her greatly.

Indeed, when she had no longer anything to refuse him, she thrust him from her, with genuine indignation, and then flung herself into his arms. No purpose was apparent in all this behaviour. She thought herself damned without remission, and sought to shut out the vision of hell by showering the most passionate caresses on Julien. In a word, nothing would have been wanting to complete our hero's happiness, not even a burning sensibility in the woman he had just vanquished, had he been capable of enjoying it. Julien's departure brought no cessation of the transports which were shaking her in spite of herself, nor of her struggle with the remorse that was tearing her.

'Heavens! Is to be happy, to be loved, no more than that?' Such was Julien's first thought on his return to his own room. He was in that state of astonishment and uneasy misgivings into which a heart falls when it has just obtained what it has long desired. It has grown used to desiring, finds nothing left to desire, and has not yet acquired any memories. Like a soldier returning from a parade, Julien was busily engaged in reviewing all the details of his conduct. 'Have I failed in one of the duties I owe to myself? Have I really played my part?'

And what a part! The part of a man accustomed to shine before women.

Chapter 16

The Day After

He turn'd his lips to hers, and with his hand Call'd back the tangles of her wandering hair.

Don Juan, I. 170

Fortunately for Julien's pride, Madame de Renal had been too greatly agitated and surprised to notice the fatuity of the man who in a moment had become everything in the world to her.

As she was imploring him to withdraw, seeing the day begin to break:

'Oh, Heavens!' she said, 'if my husband has heard any sound, I am lost.'

Julien, who had leisure for composing phrases, remembered one to the point:

'Should you regret your life?'

'Ah! Very much at this moment, but I should not regret having known you.'

Julien found that his dignity required him to return to his room in broad daylight and with deliberate want of precaution.

The continuous attention with which he watched his own slightest actions, in the insane idea of being taken for a man of experience, had this one advantage; when he saw Madame de Renal again, at luncheon, his behaviour was a miracle of prudence.

As for her, she could not look at him without blushing to the whites of her eyes, and could not live for an instant without looking at him; she noticed her own confusion, and her efforts to conceal it increased. Julien raised his eyes to hers once only. At first, Madame de Renal admired his prudence. Presently, seeing that this solitary glance was not repeated, she took alarm: 'Can it be that he does not love me any more,' she asked herself; 'alas, I am far too old for him; I am ten years his senior.'

On the way from the dining-room to the garden, she pressed Julien's hand. In the surprise that he felt at so extraordinary a token of affection, he gazed at her with passion; for she had struck him as looking very pretty at luncheon, and, without raising his eyes, he had spent his time making a detailed catalogue of her charms. This look consoled Madame de Renal; it did not remove all her uneasiness; but her uneasiness removed, almost entirely, the remorse she felt when she thought of her husband.

At luncheon, the said husband had noticed nothing; not so with Madame Derville; she feared Madame de Renal to be on the point of succumbing. All through the day, her bold, incisive friendship did not spare the other those hinted suggestions intended to portray in hideous colours the danger that she was running.

Madame de Renal was burning to be left alone with Julien; she wanted to ask him whether he still loved her. Despite the unalterable gentleness of her nature, she was more than once on the point of letting her friend know what a nuisance she was making of herself.

That evening, in the garden, Madame Derville arranged things so skilfully that she found herself placed between Madame de Renal and Julien. Madame de Renal, who had formed a delicious image of the pleasure of pressing Julien's hand and carrying it to her lips, could not so much as address a word to him.

This catastrophe increased her agitation. Remorse for one thing was gnawing her. She had so scolded Julien for the imprudence he had shown in coming to her room the night before, that she trembled lest he might not come that night. She left the garden early, and went up to wait in her room. But, beside herself with impatience, she rose and went to glue her ear to Julien's door.

Despite the uncertainty and passion that were devouring her, she did not dare enter. This action seemed to her the last word in lowness, for it serves as text to a country maxim.

The servants were not all in bed. Prudence obliged her finally to return to her own room. Two hours of waiting were two centuries of torment.

But Julien was too loyal to what he called his duty, to fail in the execution, detail by detail, of what he had laid down for himself.

As one o'clock struck, he slipped quietly from his room, made sure that the master of the house was sound asleep, and appeared before Madame de Renal. On this occasion he found greater happiness with his mistress, for he was less continually thinking of the part he had to play. He had eyes to see and ears to hear. What Madame de Renal said to him about his age contributed to give him some degree of self-assurance.

'Alas! I am ten years older than you! How can you love me?' she repeated without any object, simply because the idea oppressed her.

Julien could not conceive such a thing, but he saw that her distress was genuine, and almost entirely forgot his fear of being ridiculous.

The foolish idea of his being regarded as a servile lover, at his mistress's beck and call, on account of his humble birth, vanished likewise. In proportion as Julien's transports reassured his coy mistress, she recovered some degree of happiness and the faculty of criticising her lover. Fortunately, he showed almost nothing, on this occasion, of that borrowed air which had made their meeting the night before a victory, but not a pleasure. Had she noticed his intentness upon playing a part, the painful discovery would have robbed her of all happiness for ever. She could have seen in it nothing else than a painful consequence of their disparity of age.

Albeit Madame de Renal had never thought about theories of love, difference of age is, next to difference of fortune, one of the great commonplaces of provincial humour, whenever there is any talk of love.

In a few days, Julien, all the ardour of his youth restored, was madly in love.

‘One must admit,’ he said to himself, ‘that her kindness of heart is angelic, and that no one could be prettier.’

He had almost entirely lost the idea of a part to be played. In a moment of unrestrained impulse, he even confessed to her all his anxieties. This confidence raised to its climax the passion that he inspired. ‘So I have not had any fortunate rival,’ Madame de Renal said to herself with ecstasy. She ventured to question him as to the portrait in which he took such an interest; Julien swore to her that it was that of a man.

When Madame de Renal was calm enough to reflect, she could not get over her astonishment that such happiness could exist and that she had never had the slightest idea of it.

‘Ah!’ she said to herself, ‘if I had known Julien ten years ago, when I might still be considered pretty!’

Julien’s thoughts were worlds apart from these. His love was still founded in ambition: it was the joy of possessing — he, a poor creature so unfortunate and so despised — so noble and beautiful a woman. His acts of adoration, his transports at the sight of his mistress’s charms, ended by reassuring her somewhat as to the difference in age. Had she possessed a little of that worldly wisdom a woman of thirty has long enjoyed in more civilised lands, she would have shuddered for the continuance of a love which seemed to exist only upon surprise and the titillation of self-esteem.

In the moments when he forgot his ambition, Julien went into transports over everything that Madame de Renal possessed, including her hats and gowns. He could not tire of the pleasure of inhaling their perfume. He opened her wardrobe and stood for hours on end marvelling at the beauty and neat arrangement of everything inside. His mistress, leaning upon his shoulder, gazed at him; he himself gazed at those ornaments and fripperies which on a wedding day are displayed among the presents.

‘I might have married a man like this!’ Madame de Renal sometimes thought; ‘What a fiery spirit! What a rapturous life with him!’

As for Julien, never had he found himself so close to those terrible weapons of feminine artillery. ‘It is impossible,’ he told himself, ‘that in Paris there can be anything finer!’ After which he could find no objection to his happiness. Often his mistress’s sincere admiration, and her transports of passion made him forget the fatuous theory that had kept him so restrained and almost ridiculous in the first moments of their intimacy. There were moments when, despite his hypocritical habits, he found an intense pleasure in confessing to this great lady who admired him his ignorance of any number of little usages. His mistress’s rank seemed to raise him above himself. Madame de Renal, for her part, found the most exquisite moral satisfaction in thus instructing in a heap of little things this young man endowed with genius whom everyone regarded as bound one day to go so far. Even the Sub–Prefect and M. Valenod could not help admiring him: she thought the better of them accordingly. As for Madame Derville, these were by no means her sentiments. In despair at what she thought she could discern, and seeing that her wise counsel was becoming hateful to a woman who had positively lost her head, she left Vergy without offering an explanation for which she was not asked. Madame de Renal shed a few tears at her departure, and soon it seemed to her that her happiness was doubled. By the withdrawal of her guest she found herself left alone with her lover almost all day long.

Julien gave himself all the more readily to the pleasant society of his mistress inasmuch as, whenever he was left too long by himself, Fouque’s fatal offer recurred to his mind to worry him. In the first days of this new life, there were moments when he, who had never loved, who had never been loved by anyone, found so exquisite a pleasure in being sincere, that he was on the point of confessing to Madame de Renal the ambition which until then had been the very essence of his existence. He would have liked to be able to consult her as to the strange temptation which he felt in Fouque’s offer, but a trifling occurrence put a stop to all frankness.

Chapter 17

The Principal Deputy

O! how this spring of love resembleth The uncertain glory of an April day, Which now shows all the beauty of the sun, And by and by a cloud takes all away!

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

One evening as the sun set, sitting by his mistress, at the end of the orchard, safe from disturbance, he was deep in thought. ‘Will such delicious moments,’ he was wondering, ‘last for ever?’ His thoughts were absorbed in the difficulty of adopting a profession, he was deploring this great and distressing problem which puts an end to boyhood and spoils the opening years of manhood when one has no money.

‘Ah!’ he cried, ‘Napoleon was indeed the man sent by God to help the youth of France! Who is to take his place? What will the poor wretches do without him, even those who are richer than I, who have just the few crowns needed to procure them a good education, and not enough money to purchase a man at twenty and launch themselves in a career! Whatever happens,’ he added with deep sigh, ‘that fatal memory will for ever prevent us from being happy!’

He saw Madame de Renal frown suddenly; she assumed a cold, disdainful air; this line of thought seemed to her worthy of a servant. Brought up in the idea that she was extremely rich, it seemed to her a thing to be taken for granted that Julien was also. She loved him a thousand times more than life itself, and money to her meant nothing.

Julien was far from guessing what was in her mind. This frown brought him back to earth. He had presence of mind enough to arrange his sentence and to make it plain to the noble lady, seated so close beside him on the bank of verdure, that the words he had just uttered were some that he had heard during his expedition to his friend the timber merchant. This was the reasoning of the impious.

‘Very well! Don’t mix any more with such people,’ said Madame de Renal, still preserving a trace of that glacial air which had suddenly taken the place of an expression of the tenderest affection.

This frown, or rather his remorse for his imprudence, was the first check administered to the illusion that was bearing Julien away. He said to himself: ‘She is good and kind, her feeling for me is strong, but she has been brought up in the enemy’s camp. They are bound to be specially afraid of that class of men of spirit who, after a good education, have not enough money to enter upon a career. What would become of these nobles, if it were granted us to fight them with equal weapons? Myself, for instance, as Mayor of Verrieres, well intentioned, honest as M. de Renal is at heart, how I should deal with the vicar, M. Valenod and all their rascalities! How justice should triumph in Verrieres. It is not their talents that would prove an obstacle. They are endlessly feeling their way.’

Julien’s happiness was, that day, on the point of becoming permanent. What our hero lacked was the courage to be sincere. He needed the courage to give battle, but on the spot; Madame de Renal had been surprised by his speech, because the men whom she was in the habit of meeting were always saying that the return of Robespierre was made possible especially by these young men of the lower orders, who had been too well educated. Madame de Renal’s cold manner persisted for some time, and seemed to Julien to be marked. This was because the fear of having said to him indirectly something unpleasant followed her repugnance at his unfortunate speech. This distress was clearly shown on her pure countenance; so simple when she was happy and away from bores.

Julien no longer dared give himself up freely to his dreams. More calm and less amorous, he decided that it was imprudent in him to go to Madame de Renal in her room. It would be better if she came to him; if a servant saw her

moving about the house, there would be a score of possible reasons to account for her action.

But this arrangement also had its drawbacks. Julien had received from Fouque certain books for which he, as a student of divinity, could never have asked a bookseller. He ventured to open them only at night. Often he would have been just as well pleased not to be interrupted by an assignation, the tension of waiting for which, even before the little scene in the orchard, would have left him incapable of reading.

He was indebted to Madame de Renal for an entirely new understanding of the books he read. He had ventured to ply her with questions as to all sorts of little things ignorance of which seriously handicaps the intelligence of a young man born outside the ranks of society, whatever natural genius one may choose to attribute to him.

This education in love, given by an extremely ignorant woman, was a blessing. Julien was at once enabled to see society as it is today. His mind was not perplexed by accounts of what it was in the past, two thousand years ago, or sixty years ago merely, in the days of Voltaire and Louis XV. To his unspeakable joy a cloud passed from before his eyes; he understood at last the things that were happening at Verrieres.

In the foreground appeared the highly complicated intrigues woven, for the last two years, round the Prefect at Besancon. They were supported by letters that came from Paris, and bore all the most illustrious signatures. It was a question of making M. de Moirod, the most bigoted man in the place, the Principal instead of the Second Deputy to the Mayor of Verrieres.

His rival was an extremely rich manufacturer, whom it was absolutely essential to confine to the post of Second Deputy.

Julien at last understood the hints that he had overheard, when the cream of local society came to dine with M. de Renal. This privileged class was greatly taken up with this selection of a Principal Deputy, of which the rest of the town and especially the Liberals did not even suspect the possibility. What gave it its importance was that, as everybody knew, the eastern side of

the main street of Verrieres must be moved back more than nine feet, for this street was now a royal highway.

Well, if M. de Moirod, who owned three houses that would have to be moved back, succeeded in becoming Principal Deputy, and so Mayor in the event of M. de Renal's being returned to Parliament, he would shut his eyes, and it would be possible to make little, imperceptible repairs to the houses that encroached on the public thoroughfare, as a result of which they would be good for a hundred years. Despite the great piety and admitted probity of M. de Moirod, it was certain that he could be managed, for he had a large family. Among the houses that would have to be moved back, nine belonged to the very best people in Verrieres.

In Julien's eyes, this intrigue was far more important than the history of the battle of Fontenoy, a name which he saw for the first time in one of the books that Fouque had sent him. Many things had astonished Julien during the five years since he had begun to spend his evenings with the cure. But discretion and a humble spirit being the chief qualities required in a divinity student, it had always been impossible for him to ask any questions.

One day, Madame de Renal had given an order to her husband's valet, Julien's enemy.

'But, Ma'am, today is the last Friday of the month,' the man answered her with a curious expression.

'Go,' said Madame de Renal.

'Well,' said Julien, 'he is going to that hay store, which used to be a church, and was recently restored to the faith; but why? That is one of the mysteries which I have never been able to penetrate.'

'It is a most beneficial, but a very strange institution,' replied Madame de Renal. 'Women are not admitted; all that I know of it is that they all address one another as tu. For instance, this servant will find M. Valenod there, and that conceited fool will not be in the least annoyed at hearing himself called tu by Saint–Jean, and will answer him in the same tone. If you really want to know what they do there, I can ask M. de Maugiron and M. Valenod for

details. We pay twenty francs for each servant so that they do not cut our throats.'

The time flew. The memory of his mistress's charms distracted Julien from his black ambition. The necessity to refrain from speaking to her of serious, reasonable matters, since they were on opposite sides, added, without his suspecting it, to the happiness that he owed to her and to the power which she was acquiring over him.

At those moments when the presence of quick-eared children confined them to the language of cold reason, it was with a perfect docility that Julien, gazing at her with eyes that burned with love, listened to her explanations of the world as it really was. Often, in the middle of an account of some clever piece of roguery, in connection with the laying out of a road, or of some astounding contract, Madame de Renal's mind would suddenly wander to the point of delirium; Julien was obliged to scold her, she allowed herself to caress him in the same way as she caressed her children. This was because there were days on which she imagined that she loved him like a child of her own. Had she not to reply incessantly to his artless questions about a thousand simple matters of which a child of good family is not ignorant at fifteen? A moment later, she was admiring him as her master. His intelligence positively frightened her; she thought she could perceive more clearly every day the future great man in this young cleric. She saw him as Pope, she saw him as First Minister, like Richelieu.

'Shall I live long enough to see you in your glory?' she said to Julien; 'there is a place waiting for a great man; the Monarchy, the Church need one; these gentlemen say so every day. If some Richelieu does not stem the torrent of private judgment, all is lost.'

Chapter 18

A King at Verrieres

Are you fit only to be flung down like the corpse of a nation, its soul gone and its veins emptied of blood?

(From the Bishop's address,

delivered in the Chapel of Saint Clement)

On the third of September, at ten o'clock in the evening, a mounted constable aroused the whole of Verrieres by galloping up the main street; he brought the news that His Majesty the King of — was coming the following Sunday, and it was now Tuesday. The Prefect authorised, that is to say ordered, the formation of a Guard of Honour; he must be received with all the pomp possible. A courier was sent to Vergy. M. de Renal arrived during the night and found the whole town in a ferment. Everybody was claiming a right to something; those who had no other duty were engaging balconies to see the King enter the town.

Who was to command the Guard of Honour? M. de Renal saw at once how important it was, in the interest of the houses that would have to be moved back, that M. de Moirod should fill this post. It might be held to constitute a claim to the place of Principal Deputy. There was nothing to be said against M. de Moirod's devotion; it went beyond all comparison, but he had never ridden a horse in his life. He was a man of six and thirty, timid in every way, and equally afraid of falls and of being laughed at.

The Mayor sent for him at five o'clock in the morning.

‘You see, Sir, that I am asking your advice, as though you already occupied the post in which all right-minded people would gladly see you. In this unfortunate town the manufacturers prosper, the Liberal Party are becoming millionaires, they aspire to power, they will forge themselves weapons out of everything. We must consider the King’s interests, those of the Monarchy, and above all those of our holy religion. To whom do you think, Sir, that we ought to entrust the command of the Guard of Honour?’

In spite of the horrible fear that a horse inspired in him, M. de Moirod ended by accepting this honour like a martyr. ‘I shall manage to adopt the right manner,’ he told the Mayor. There was barely time to overhaul the uniforms which had been used seven years before on the passage of a Prince of the Blood.

At seven, Madame de Renal arrived from Vergy with Julien and the children. She found her drawing-room full of Liberal ladies who were preaching the union of parties, and had come to implore her to make her husband find room in the Guard of Honour for theirs. One of them asserted that if her husband were not chosen he would go bankrupt from grief. Madame de Renal sent them all packing at once. She seemed greatly occupied.

Julien was surprised and even more annoyed by her making a mystery to him of what was disturbing her. ‘I thought as much,’ he told himself bitterly, ‘her love is eclipsed by the joy of receiving a King in her house. All this excitement dazzles her. She will begin to love me again when her brain is no longer troubled by ideas of caste.’

The surprising thing was that he loved her all the more for this.

The upholsterers began to invade the whole house, he long watched in vain for an opportunity of saying a word to her. At length he found her coming out of his own room, carrying one of his coats. They were alone. He tried to speak to her. She made off, declining to listen to him. ‘What a fool I am to be in love with a woman like that, ambition makes her just as stupid as her husband.’

She was even more so: one of her great wishes, which she had never confessed to Julien, for fear of shocking him, was to see him discard, if only

for a day, his gloomy black coat. With an ingenuity truly admirable in so natural a woman, she secured, first from M. de Moirod, and then from the Sub–Prefect M. de Maugiron, that Julien should be appointed to the Guard of Honour in preference to five or six young men, sons of manufacturers in easy circumstances, at least two of whom were of an exemplary piety. M. Valenod, who was reckoning on lending his carriage to the prettiest women of the town, in order to have his fine Norman horses admired, agreed to let Julien, the person he hated most, have one of them. But each of the members of the Guard of Honour possessed or had borrowed one of those sky-blue coats with a pair of colonel's epaulettes in silver, which had shone in public seven years before. Madame de Renal wanted a new coat, and she had but four days in which to send to Besancon, and to procure from there the uniform, the weapons, the hat, and all the other requisites for a Guard of Honour. What is rather amusing is that she thought it imprudent to have Julien's coat made at Verrieres. She wished to take him by surprise, him and the town.

The work of organising the Guard of Honour and popular feeling finished, the Mayor had next to deal with a great religious ceremony; the King of —— refused to pass through Verrieres without paying a visit to the famous relic of Saint Clement which is preserved at Bray-le-Haut, a short league from the town. The clergy must be present in full force, and this was the most difficult thing to arrange; M. Maslon, the new cure, was determined, at any price, to keep M. Chelan out. In vain did M. de Renal point out to him the imprudence of this action. The Marquis de La Mole, whose ancestors for so long were Governors of the Province, had been chosen to accompany the King of —— . He had known the abbe Chelan for thirty years. He would be certain to inquire for him on arriving at Verrieres, and, if he found that he was in disgrace, was quite capable of going in search of him, to the little house to which he had retired, accompanied by such of the procession as were under his orders. What a rebuff that would be!

'I am dishonoured here and at Besancon,' replied the abbe Maslon, 'if he appears among my clergy. A Jansenist, great heavens!'

'Whatever you may say, my dear abbe,' M. de Renal assured him, 'I shall not expose the municipal government of Verrieres to the risk of an insult from M. de La Mole. You don't know the man, he is sound enough at court;

but here, in the country, he has a satirical, mocking spirit, and likes nothing so much as to embarrass people. He is capable, simply for his own amusement, of covering us with ridicule in the eyes of the Liberals.'

It was not until the night between Saturday and Sunday, after three days of discussion, that the abbe Maslon's pride gave way before the Mayor's fear, which had turned to courage. The next thing was to write a honeyed note to the abbe Chelan, inviting him to be present at the veneration of the relic at Bray-le-Haut, his great age and infirmities permitting. M. Chelan asked for and obtained a letter of invitation for Julien, who was to accompany him in the capacity of sub-deacon.

Early on Sunday morning, thousands of peasants, arriving from the neighbouring mountains, flooded the streets of Verrieres. It was a day of brilliant sunshine. At length, about three o'clock, a tremor ran through the crowd; they had caught sight of a beacon blazing on a rock two leagues from Verrieres. This signal announced that the King had just entered the territory of the Department. Immediately the sound of all the bells and the repeated discharge of an old Spanish cannon belonging to the town proclaimed its joy at this great event. Half the population climbed up on the roofs. All the women were on the balconies. The Guard of Honour began to move. The brilliant uniforms were greatly admired, each of the onlookers recognised a relative or friend. There was general laughter at the alarm of M. de Moirod, whose cautious hand lay ready at any moment to clutch hold of his saddle. But one thing made them forget all the others: the left-hand man in the ninth section was a handsome lad, very slender, who at first was not identified. Presently a cry of indignation from some, the astonished silence of others announced a general sensation. The onlookers recognised in this young man, riding one of M. Valenod's Norman horses, young Sorel, the carpenter's son. There was one unanimous outcry against the Mayor, especially among the Liberals. What, because this young labourer dressed up as a priest was tutor to his brats, he had the audacity to appoint him to the Guard of Honour, to the exclusion of M. This and M. That, wealthy manufacturers! 'Those gentlemen,' said a banker's wife, 'ought really to offer an affront to the little upstart, born in the gutter.'

'He has a wicked temper and he is wearing a sabre,' replied her companion; 'he would be quite treacherous enough to slash them across the face.'

The comments made by the aristocratic element were more dangerous. The ladies asked themselves whether the Mayor alone was responsible for this grave breach of etiquette. On the whole justice was done to his contempt for humble birth.

While he was giving rise to so much comment, Julien was the happiest man alive. Bold by nature, he had a better seat on a horse than most of the young men of this mountain town. He saw in the eyes of the women that they were talking about him.

His epaulettes were more brilliant because they were new. At every moment his horse threatened to rear; he was in the seventh heaven of joy.

His happiness knew no bounds when, as they passed near the old rampart, the sound of the small cannon made his horse swerve out of the ranks. By the greatest accident, he did not fall off; from that moment he felt himself a hero. He was Napoleon's orderly officer and was charging a battery.

There was one person happier than he. First of all she had watched him pass from one of the windows of the town hall; then, getting into her carriage, and rapidly making a wide detour, she was in time to tremble when his horse carried him out of the ranks. Finally, her carriage passing out at a gallop through another of the gates of the town, she made her way back to the road along which the King was to pass, and was able to follow the Guard of Honour at a distance of twenty paces, in a noble cloud of dust. Ten thousand peasants shouted: 'Long live the King' when the Mayor had the honour of addressing His Majesty. An hour later, when, having listened to all the speeches, the King was about to enter the town, the small cannon began to fire again with frenzied haste. But an accident occurred, not to the gunners who had learned their trade at Leipsic and Montmirail, but to the future Principal Deputy, M. de Moirod. His horse dropped him gently into the one puddle to be found along the whole road, which created a scandal, because he had to be pulled out of the way to enable the King's carriage to pass.

His Majesty alighted at the fine new church, which was decked out for the occasion with all its crimson hangings. The King was to halt for dinner, immediately after which he would take the road again to go and venerate the famous relic of Saint Clement. No sooner was the King inside the church

than Julien went off at a gallop to M. de Renal's. There he discarded with a sigh his fine sky-blue coat, his sabre, his epaulettes, to resume the little threadbare black coat. He mounted his horse again, and in a few minutes was at Bray-le-Haut, which stands on the summit of an imposing hill. 'Enthusiasm is multiplying these peasants,' thought Julien. 'One cannot move at Verrieres, and here there are more than ten thousand of them round this old abbey.' Half ruined by the vandalism of the Revolution, it had been magnificently restored since the Restoration, and there was already some talk of miracles. Julien joined the abbe Chelan, who scolded him severely, and gave him a cassock and surplice. He vested himself hurriedly in these and followed M. Chelan, who was going in search of the youthful Bishop of Agde. This was a nephew of M. de La Mole, recently appointed to the See, who had been selected to exhibit the relic to the King. But the Bishop was not to be found.

The clergy were growing impatient. They awaited their leader in the sombre, gothic cloister of the ancient abbey. Four and twenty parish priests had been collected to represent the original chapter of Bray-le-Haut which prior to 1789 had consisted of four and twenty canons. Having spent three quarters of an hour in deploring the youthfulness of the Bishop, the priests decided that it would be a good thing if their Dean were to go and inform His Lordship that the King was on his way, and that it was time they were in the choir. M. Chelan's great age had made him Dean; despite the anger he showed with Julien, he made a sign to him to follow him. Julien carried his surplice admirably. By some secret process of the ecclesiastical toilet-table, he had made his fine curly hair lie quite flat; but, by an oversight which intensified the anger of M. Chelan, beneath the long folds of his cassock one could see the spurs of the Guard of Honour.

When they reached the Bishop's apartment, the tall lackeys smothered in gold lace barely condescended to inform the old cure that His Lordship could not be seen. They laughed at him when he tried to explain that in his capacity as Dean of the Noble Chapter of Bray-le-Haut, it was his privilege to be admitted at all times to the presence of the officiating Bishop.

Julien's proud spirit was offended by the insolence of the lackeys. He set off on a tour of the dormitories of the old abbey, trying every door that he came to. One quite small door yielded to his efforts and he found himself in a cell

in the midst of His Lordship's body-servants, dressed in black with chains round their necks. Seeing his air of haste, these gentlemen supposed that the Bishop had sent for him and allowed him to pass. He went a little way and found himself in an immense gothic chamber, very dark and panelled throughout in black oak; with a single exception, its pointed windows had been walled up with bricks. There was nothing to conceal the coarse surface of this masonry, which formed a sorry contrast to the venerable splendour of the woodwork. Both sides of this room, famous among the antiquarians of Burgundy, which the Duke Charles the Bold built about the year 1470 in expiation of some offence, were lined with wooden stalls, richly carved. These displayed, inlaid in wood of different colours, all the mysteries of the Apocalypse.

This melancholy splendour, degraded by the intrusion of the bare bricks and white plaster, impressed Julien. He stood there in silence. At the other end of the room, near the only window through which any light came, he saw a portable mirror framed in mahogany. A young man, robed in violet with a lace surplice, but bare-headed, was standing three paces away from the mirror. This article appeared out of place in such a room, and had doubtless been brought there from the town. Julien thought that the young man seemed irritated; with his right hand he was gravely giving benedictions in the direction of the mirror.

'What can this mean?' he wondered. 'Is it a preliminary ceremony that this young priest is performing? He is perhaps the Bishop's secretary . . . he will be rude like the lackeys . . . but what of that, let us try him.'

He went forward and passed slowly down the length of the room, keeping his eyes fixed on that solitary window and watching the young man who continued to give benedictions, with a slow motion but in endless profusion, and without pausing for a moment.

As he drew nearer he was better able to see the other's look of annoyance. The costliness of his lace-bordered surplice brought Julien to a standstill some distance away from the magnificent mirror.

'It is my duty to speak,' he reminded himself at length; but the beauty of the room had touched his feelings and he was chilled in anticipation by the harsh

words that would be addressed to him.

The young man caught sight of him in the glass, turned round, and suddenly discarding his look of irritation said to him in the pleasantest tone:

‘Well, Sir, is it ready yet?’

Julien remained speechless. As this young man turned towards him, Julien saw the pectoral cross on his breast: it was the Bishop of Agde. ‘So young,’ thought Julien; ‘at the most, only six or eight years older than myself!’

And he felt ashamed of his spurs.

‘Monseigneur,’ he replied timidly. ‘I am sent by the Dean of the Chapter, M. Chelan.’

‘Ah! I have an excellent account of him,’ said the bishop in a courteous tone which left Julien more fascinated than ever. ‘But I beg your pardon, Sir, I took you for the person who is to bring me back my mitre. It was carelessly packed in Paris; the silver tissue has been dreadfully frayed at the top. It will create a shocking effect,’ the young Bishop went on with a sorrowful air, ‘and they are keeping me waiting too.’

‘Monseigneur, I shall go and find the mitre, with Your Lordship’s permission.’

Julien’s fine eyes had their effect.

‘Go, Sir,’ the Bishop answered with exquisite courtesy; ‘I must have it at once. I am sorry to keep the gentlemen of the Chapter waiting.’

When Julien was halfway down the room, he turned to look at the Bishop and saw that he was once more engaged in giving benedictions. ‘What can that be?’ Julien asked himself; ‘no doubt, it is a religious preparation necessary to the ceremony that is to follow.’ When he came to the cell in which the servants were waiting, he saw the mitre in their hands. These gentlemen, yielding in spite of themselves to Julien’s imperious glance, surrendered it to him.

He felt proud to be carrying it: as he crossed the room, he walked slowly; he held it with respect. He found the Bishop seated before the glass; but, from time to time, his right hand, tired as it was, still gave the benediction. Julien helped him to put on the mitre. The Bishop shook his head.

‘Ah! It will keep on,’ he said to Julien with a satisfied air. ‘Will you go a little way off?’

Whereupon the Bishop walked at a smart pace to the middle of the room, then returning towards the mirror with a slow step, he resumed his air of irritation and went on solemnly giving benedictions.

Julien was spellbound with astonishment; he was tempted to guess what this meant, but did not dare. The Bishop stopped, and looking at him with an air from which the solemnity rapidly vanished:

‘What do you say to my mitre, Sir, does it look right?’

‘Quite right, Monseigneur.’

‘It is not too far back? That would look rather silly; but it does not do, either, to wear them pulled down over one’s eyes like an officer’s shako.’

‘It seems to me to be quite right.’

‘The King of —— is accustomed to venerable clergy who are doubtless very solemn. I should not like, especially in view of my age, to appear too frivolous.’

And the Bishop once more began to walk about the room scattering benedictions.

‘It is quite clear,’ said Julien, at last venturing to understand, ‘he is practising the benediction.’

A few moments later:

‘I am ready,’ said the Bishop. ‘Go, Sir, and inform the Dean and the gentlemen of the Chapter.’

Presently M. Chelan, followed by the two oldest of the cures, entered by an immense door, magnificently carved, which Julien had not noticed. But this time he remained in his place in the extreme rear, and could see the Bishop only over the shoulders of the ecclesiastics who crowded towards this door.

The Bishop crossed the room slowly; when he came to the threshold the cures formed in processional order. After a momentary confusion the procession began to move, intoning a psalm. The Bishop came last, between M. Chelan and another cure of great age. Julien found a place for himself quite close to His Lordship, as being attached to the abbe Chelan. They moved down the long corridors of the abbey of Bray-le-Haut; in spite of the brilliant sunshine, these were dark and damp. At length they arrived at the door of the cloister. Julien was speechless with admiration of so fine a ceremony. His heart was divided between the ambition aroused by the Bishop's youthfulness, and the sensibility and exquisite manners of this prelate. His courtesy was of a very different kind from M. de Renal's, even on his good days. 'The more one rises towards the highest rank of society,' thought Julien, 'the more one finds these charming manners.'

They entered the church by a side door; suddenly an appalling crash made its ancient vaults resound; Julien thought that the walls were collapsing. It was again the small cannon; drawn by eight horses at a gallop, it had just arrived; and immediately on its arrival, brought into action by the gunners of Leipsic, it was firing five rounds a minute, as though the Prussians had been in front of it.

But this stirring sound no longer had any effect upon Julien, he dreamed no more of Napoleon and martial glory. 'So young,' he was thinking, 'to be Bishop of Agde! But where is Agde? And how much is it worth? Two or three hundred thousand francs, perhaps.'

His Lordship's servants appeared, carrying a magnificent dais; M. Chelan took one of the poles, but actually it was Julien that bore it. The Bishop took his place beneath it. He had really succeeded in giving himself the air of an old man; our hero's admiration knew no bounds. 'What cannot one do if one is clever!' he thought.

The King made his entry. Julien was so fortunate as to see him at close range. The Bishop addressed him with unction, and did not forget to include a slight touch of confusion, extremely flattering to His Majesty. We shall not repeat the account of the ceremonies at Bray-le-Haut; for a fortnight they filled the columns of all the newspapers of the Department. Julien learned, from the Bishop's speech, that the King was descended from Charles the Bold.

Later on it was one of Julien's duties to check the accounts of what this ceremony had cost. M. de La Mole, who had secured a bishopric for his nephew, had chosen to pay him the compliment of bearing the whole of the expense himself. The ceremony at Bray-le-Haut alone cost three thousand eight hundred francs.

After the Bishop's address and the King's reply, His Majesty took his place beneath the dais; he then knelt down most devoutly upon a cushion close to the altar. The choir was enclosed with stalls, and these stalls were raised two steps above the pavement. It was on the second of these steps that Julien sat at the feet of M. Chelan, not unlike a train-bearer at the feet of his Cardinal, in the Sistine Chapel, in Rome. There were a Te Deum, clouds of incense, endless volleys of musketry and artillery; the peasants were frantic with joy and piety. Such a day undoes the work of a hundred numbers of the Jacobin papers.

Julien was within six paces of the King, who was praying with genuine fervour. He noticed for the first time a small man of intelligent appearance, whose coat was almost bare of embroidery. But he wore a sky-blue riband over this extremely simple coat. He was nearer to the King than many other gentlemen, whose coats were so covered with gold lace that, to use Julien's expression, one could not see the cloth. He learned a minute later that this was M. de La Mole. He decided that he wore a haughty, indeed an insolent air.

'This Marquis would not be polite like my dear Bishop,' he thought. 'Ah! The career of a churchman makes one gentle and wise. But the King has come to venerate the relic, and I see no relic. Where can Saint Clement be?'

A little clerk, who was next to him, informed him that the venerable relic was in the upper part of the building, in a chapelle ardente.

‘What is a chapelle ardente?’ Julien asked himself.

But he would not ask for an explanation of the words. He followed the proceedings with even closer attention.

On the occasion of a visit from a sovereign prince, etiquette requires that the canons shall not accompany the Bishop. But as he started for the chapelle ardente His Lordship of Agde summoned the abbe Chelan; Julien ventured to follow him.

After climbing a long stair, they came to a very small door, the frame of which was sumptuously gilded. This work had a look of having just been completed.

Outside the door were gathered on their knees four and twenty girls, belonging to the most distinguished families of Verrieres. Before opening the door, the Bishop sank on his knees in the midst of these girls, who were all pretty. While he was praying aloud, it seemed as though they could not sufficiently admire his fine lace, his charm, his young and pleasant face. This spectacle made our hero lose all that remained of his reason. At that moment, he would have fought for the Inquisition, and in earnest. Suddenly the door flew open. The little chapel seemed to be ablaze with light. One saw upon the altar more than a thousand candles arranged in eight rows, separated from one another by clusters of flowers. The sweet odour of the purest incense rose in clouds from the gate of the sanctuary. The newly gilded chapel was quite small, but very lofty. Julien noticed that there were on the altar candles more than fifteen feet long. The girls could not restrain a cry of admiration. No one had been admitted to the tiny ante-chapel save the twenty-four girls, the two priests and Julien.

Presently the King arrived, followed only by M. de La Mole and his Great Chamberlain. The guards themselves remained outside, on their knees, presenting their arms.

His Majesty flung himself rather than knelt down on the faldstool. It was then only that Julien, pressed against the gilded door, caught sight, beneath a girl's bare arm, of the charming statue of Saint Clement. It was hidden beneath the altar, in the garb of a young Roman soldier. He had in his throat a large wound from which the blood seemed to be flowing. The artist had surpassed himself; the eyes, dying but full of grace, were half closed. A budding moustache adorned the charming mouth, which being slightly open had the effect of being still engaged in prayer. At the sight of this statue, the girl nearest to Julien wept hot tears; one of her tears fell upon Julien's hand.

After an interval of prayer in the most profound silence, disturbed only by the distant sound of the bells of all the villages within a radius of ten leagues, the Bishop of Agde asked the King's permission to speak. He concluded a brief but highly edifying discourse with these words, simple in themselves, but thereby all the better assured of their effect.

'Never forget, young Christian women, that you have seen one of the great Kings of the earth upon his knees before the servants of this all-powerful and terrible God. These servants, frail, persecuted, martyred upon earth, as you can see from the still bleeding wound of Saint Clement, are triumphant in heaven. All your lives, I think, young Christians, you will remember this day. You will detest impiety. Always you will remain faithful to this God who is so great, so terrible, but so good.'

At these words, the Bishop rose with authority.

'You promise me?' he said, extending his arm with an air of inspiration.

'We promise,' said the girls, bursting into tears.

'I receive your promise, in the name of our terrible God!' the Bishop concluded in a voice of thunder. And the ceremony was at an end.

The King himself was in tears. It was not until long afterwards that Julien was calm enough to inquire where were the bones of the Saint, sent from Rome to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. He was told that they were embodied in the charming wax figure.

His Majesty deigned to permit the girls who had accompanied him into the chapel to wear a red riband upon which were embroidered the words: ‘HATRED OF IMPIETY, PERPETUAL ADORATION.’

M. de La Mole ordered ten thousand bottles of wine to be distributed among the peasants. That evening, at Verrieres, the Liberals found an excuse for illuminating their houses a hundred times more brilliantly than the Royalists. Before leaving the town, the King paid a visit to M. de Moirod.

Chapter 19

To Think Is To Be Full of Sorrow

The grotesque character of everyday occurrences conceals from one the real misery of passions.

BARNAVE

While he was replacing its ordinary furniture in the room that M. de La Mole had occupied, Julien found a piece of stout paper, folded twice across. He read at the foot of the first page:

To H. E., M. le Marquis de La Mole, Peer of France, Knight of the Royal Orders, etc., etc.

It was a petition in the rude handwriting of a cook.

Monsieur le Marquis,

All my life I have held religious principles. I was in Lyons, exposed to the bombs, at the time of the siege, in ‘93, of execrable memory. I am a communicant, I go every Sunday to mass in my parish church. I have never failed in my Easter duty, not even in ‘93, of execrable memory. My cook, for before the revolution I kept servants, my cook observes Friday. I enjoy in Verrieres a general and I venture to say merited respect. I walk beneath the dais in processions, beside the cure and the mayor. I carry, on solemn occasions, a big candle bought at my own cost. The certificates of all of which are in Paris at the Ministry of Finance. I ask Monsieur le Marquis for the Verrieres lottery office, which cannot fail to be vacant soon in one way or

another, the present holder being seriously ill, and besides voting the wrong way at the elections; etc.

DE CHOLIN

On the margin of this petition was an endorsement signed de Moirod, which began with the words:

‘I had the honour yesterday to mention the respectable person who makes this request,’ and so forth.

‘And so even that imbecile Cholin shows me the way that I must follow,’ Julien said to himself.

A week after the visit of the King of —— to Verrieres, the chief thing to emerge from the innumerable falsehoods, foolish interpretations, absurd discussions, etc., etc., to which the King, the Bishop of Agde, the Marquis de La Mole, the ten thousand bottles of wine, the unseated Moirod (who, in the hope of a Cross, did not set foot outside his own door for a whole month after his fall) were in turn subjected, was the utter indelicacy of having jockeyed into the Guard of Honour, Julien Sorel, the son of a carpenter. You ought to have heard, on this topic, the wealthy calico printers, who, morning, noon and night, used to talk themselves hoarse in preaching equality. That proud woman, Madame de Renal, was the author of this abomination. Her reason? The flashing eyes and pink cheeks of that young abbe Sorel were reason enough and to spare.

Shortly after their return to Vergy, Stanislas Xavier, the youngest of the children, took fever; at once Madame de Renal was seized by the most fearful remorse. For the first time she blamed herself for falling in love in a coherent fashion. She seemed to understand, as though by a miracle, the appalling sin into which she had let herself be drawn. Although deeply religious by nature, until this moment she had never thought of the magnitude of her crime in the eyes of God.

Long ago, at the convent of the Sacred Heart, she had loved God with a passionate love; she feared Him in the same way in this predicament. The struggles that rent her heart asunder were all the more terrible in that there

was nothing reasonable in her fear. Julien discovered that any recourse to argument irritated instead of calming her; she saw in it the language of hell. However, as Julien himself was greatly attached to little Stanislas, he was more welcome to speak to her of the child's illness: presently it assumed a grave character. Then her incessant remorse deprived Madame de Renal even of the power to sleep; she never emerged from a grim silence: had she opened her mouth, it would have been to confess her crime to God and before men.

'I beg of you,' Julien said to her, as soon as they were alone, 'say nothing to anyone; let me be the sole confidant of your griefs. If you still love me, do not speak! your words cannot cure our Stanislas of his fever.'

But his attempts at consolation produced no effect; he did not know that Madame de Renal had taken it into her head that, to appease the anger of a jealous God, she must either hate Julien or see her son die. It was because she felt that she could not hate her lover that she was so unhappy.

'Avoid my presence,' she said to Julien one day; 'in the name of God, leave this house: it is your presence here that is killing my son.

'God is punishing me,' she added in a whisper; 'He is just; I adore His equity; my crime is shocking, and I was living without remorse! It was the first sign of departure from God: I ought to be doubly punished.'

Julien was deeply touched. He was unable to see in this attitude either hypocrisy or exaggeration. 'She believes that she is killing her son by loving me, and yet the unhappy woman loves me more than her son. That, how can I doubt it, is the remorse that is killing her; there is true nobility of feeling. But how can I have inspired such love, I, so poor, so ill-bred, so ignorant, often so rude in my manners?'

One night the child's condition was critical. About two o'clock in the morning, M. de Renal came to see him. The boy, burning with fever, was extremely flushed and did not recognise his father. Suddenly Madame de Renal threw herself at her husband's feet: Julien saw that she was going to reveal everything and to ruin herself for ever.

Fortunately, this strange exhibition annoyed M. de Renal.

‘Good night! Good night!’ he said and prepared to leave the room.

‘No, listen to me,’ cried his wife on her knees before him, seeking to hold him back. ‘Learn the whole truth. It is I that am killing my son. I gave him his life, and I am taking it from him. Heaven is punishing me; in the eyes of God, I am guilty of murder. I must destroy and humble myself; it may be that such a sacrifice will appease the Lord.’

If M. de Renal had been a man of imagination, he would have guessed everything.

‘Romantic stuff,’ he exclaimed, thrusting away his wife who sought to embrace his knees. ‘Romantic stuff, all that! Julien, tell them to fetch the doctor at daybreak.’

And he went back to bed. Madame de Renal sank on her knees, half unconscious, with a convulsive movement thrusting away Julien, who was coming to her assistance.

Julien stood watching her with amazement.

‘So this is adultery!’ he said to himself . . . ‘Can it be possible that those rascally priests are right after all? That they, who commit so many sins, have the privilege of knowing the true theory of sin? How very odd!’

For twenty minutes since M. de Renal had left the room, Julien had seen the woman he loved, her head sunk on the child’s little bed, motionless and almost unconscious. ‘Here we have a woman of superior intelligence reduced to the last extremes of misery, because she has known me,’ he said to himself.

The hours passed rapidly. ‘What can I do for her? I must make up my mind. I have ceased to count here. What do I care for men, and their silly affectations? What can I do for her? . . . Go from her? But I shall be leaving her alone, torn by the most frightful grief. That automaton of a husband does her more harm than good. He will say something offensive to her, in his natural coarseness; she may go mad, throw herself from the window.

‘If I leave her, if I cease to watch over her, she will tell him everything. And then, for all one knows, in spite of the fortune he is to inherit through her, he will make a scandal. She may tell everything, great God, to that — abbe Maslon, who makes the illness of a child of six an excuse for never stirring out of this house, and not without purpose. In her grief and her fear of God, she forgets all that she knows of the man; she sees only the priest.’

‘Leave me,’ came suddenly from Madame de Renal as she opened her eyes.

‘I would give my life a thousand times to know how I can be of most use to you,’ replied Julien; ‘never have I so loved you, my dear angel, or rather, from this instant only, I begin to adore you as you deserve to be adored. What is to become of me apart from you, and with the knowledge that you are wretched by my fault! But I must not speak of my own sufferings. I shall go, yes, my love. But, if I leave you, if I cease to watch over you, to be constantly interposing myself between you and your husband, you will tell him everything, you will be ruined. Think of the ignominy with which he will drive you from the house; all Verrieres, all Besancon will ring with the scandal. All the blame will be cast on you; you will never be able to lift up your head again.’

‘That is all that I ask,’ she cried, rising to her feet. ‘I shall suffer, all the better.’

‘But, by this appalling scandal, you will be harming him as well!’

‘But I humble myself, I throw myself down in the mud; and in that way perhaps I save my son. This humiliation, in the sight of all, is perhaps a public penance. So far as my frailty can judge, is it not the greatest sacrifice that I can make to God? Perhaps he will deign to accept my humiliation and to spare me my son! Show me a harder sacrifice and I will hasten to perform it.’

‘Let me punish myself. I too am guilty. Would you have me retire to La Trappe? The austerity of the life there may appease your God . . . Oh, heaven! Why can I not take upon myself Stanislas’s illness?’

‘Ah! You love him,’ said Madame de Renal, rising and flinging herself into his arms.

Immediately she thrust him from her with horror.

‘I believe you! I believe you!’ she went on, having fallen once more on her knees; ‘O my only friend, why are not you Stanislas’s father? Then it would not be a horrible sin to love you more than your son.’

‘Will you permit me to stay, and henceforward only to love you as a brother? It is the only reasonable expiation; it may appease the wrath of the Most High.’

‘And I,’ she exclaimed, rising, and taking Julien’s head in her hands, and holding it at arm’s length before her eyes, ‘and I, shall I love you like a brother? Is it in my power to love you like a brother?’

Julien burst into tears.

‘I will obey you,’ he said as he fell at her feet. ‘I will obey you, whatever you may bid me do; it is the one thing left for me. My brain is smitten with blindness; I can see no course to take. If I leave you, you tell your husband all; you ruin yourself, and him at the same time. After such a disgrace he will never be elected Deputy. If I stay, you regard me as the cause of your son’s death, and you yourself die of grief. Would you like to test the effect of my going? If you like, I will punish myself for our sin by leaving you for a week. I shall pass the time in retreat wherever you choose. At the abbey of Bray-le-Haut, for instance; but swear to me that during my absence you will reveal nothing to your husband. Remember that I can never return if you speak.’

She promised; he departed, but was recalled after two days.

‘It is impossible for me to keep my oath without you. I shall speak to my husband, if you are not constantly there to order me with your eyes to be silent. Each hour of this abominable life seems to me to last a day.’

In the end, heaven took pity on this unhappy mother. Gradually Stanislas passed out of danger. But the ice was broken, her reason had learned the

magnitude of her sin, she could no more recover her equilibrium. Remorse still remained, and took the form that it was bound to take in so sincere a heart. Her life was heaven and hell; hell when she did not see Julien, heaven when she was at his feet.

'I am no longer under any illusion,' she told him, even at the moments when she ventured to give absolute rein to her love: 'I am damned, irremediably damned. You are young, you have yielded to my seduction, heaven may pardon you; but as for me, I am damned. I know it by an infallible sign. I am afraid: who would not be afraid at the sight of hell? But at heart, I am not in the least repentant. I would commit my sin again, were it to be committed. Let heaven only refrain from punishing me in this world and in my children, and I shall have more than I deserve. But you, at least, my Julien,' she cried at other moments, 'are you happy? Do you feel that I love you enough?'

Julien's distrust and suffering pride, which needed above all a love that made sacrifices, could not stand out against the sight of so great, so indubitable a sacrifice, and one that was made afresh every moment. He adored Madame de Renal. 'She may well be noble, and I the son of a working man; she loves me . . . I am not to her a footman employed in the part of lover.' Once rid of this fear, Julien fell into all the follies of love, into its mortal uncertainties.

'At least.' she cried when she saw that he doubted her love, 'let me make you happy during the few days we still have to spend together! Let us make haste; tomorrow perhaps I shall be no longer yours. If heaven strikes me through my children, in vain shall I seek to live only for love of you, not to see that it is my crime that is killing them. I shall not be able to survive that blow. Even if I would, I could not; I should go mad.'

'Ah! If I could take your sin upon my conscience, as you so generously wished that you might take Stanislas's fever!'

This great moral crisis changed the nature of the sentiment that united Julien to his mistress. His love was no longer merely admiration of her beauty, pride in the possession of her.

Their joy was thenceforward of a far higher nature, the flame that devoured them was more intense. They underwent transports of utter madness. Their

happiness would have seemed great in the eyes of other people. But they never recaptured the delicious serenity, the unclouded happiness, the spontaneous joy of the first days of their love, when Madame de Renal's one fear was that of not being loved enough by Julien. Their happiness assumed at times the aspect of crime.

In what were their happiest, and apparently their calmest moments: 'Oh! Great God! I see hell before me,' Madame de Renal would suddenly exclaim, gripping Julien's hand with a convulsive movement. 'What fearful torments! I have well deserved them.' She clutched him, clinging to him like the ivy to the wall.

Julien tried in vain to calm this agitated soul. She took his hand, which she covered with kisses. Then, relapsing into a sombre meditation; 'Hell,' she said, 'hell would be a blessing to me; I should still have some days in this world to spend with him, but hell here on earth, the death of my children . . . Yet, at that price, perhaps my crime would be forgiven me . . . Oh! Great God! Grant me not my pardon at that price. These poor children have done nothing to offend thee; 'tis I, I, the guilt is mine alone! I love a man who is not my husband.'

Julien next saw Madame de Renal reach a state that was outwardly tranquil. She sought to take the burden upon herself, she wished not to poison the existence of him whom she loved.

In the midst of these alternations of love, remorse and pleasure, the days passed for them with lightning rapidity. Julien lost the habit of reflection.

Miss Elisa went to conduct a little lawsuit which she had at Verrieres. She found M. Valenod greatly annoyed with Julien. She hated the tutor and often spoke about him to M. Valenod.

'You would ruin me, Sir, if I told you the truth!' she said to him one day. 'Employers all hang together in important things. They never forgive us poor servants for certain revelations . . .'

After these conventional phrases, which the impatient curiosity of M. Valenod found a way of cutting short, he learned the most mortifying things

in the world for his own self-esteem.

This woman, the most distinguished in the place, whom for six years he had surrounded with every attention, and, unluckily, before the eyes of all the world; this proudest of women, whose disdain had so often made him blush, had taken as her lover a little journeyman dressed up as a tutor. And that nothing might be wanting to the discomfiture of the governor of the poorhouse, Madame de Renal adored this lover.

‘And,’ the maid added with a sigh, ‘M. Julien went to no pains to make this conquest, he has never departed from his habitual coldness with Madame.’

It was only in the country that Elisa had become certain of her facts, but she thought that this intrigue dated from far earlier.

‘That, no doubt, is why,’ she continued bitterly, ‘he refused at the time to marry me. And I, like a fool, going to consult Madame de Renal, begging her to speak to the tutor!’

That same evening M. de Renal received from the town, with his newspaper, a long anonymous letter which informed him in the fullest detail of all that was going on under his roof. Julien saw him turn pale as he read this letter, which was written on blue paper, and cast angry glances at himself. For the rest of the evening the Mayor never recovered his peace of mind; it was in vain that Julien tried to flatter him by asking him to explain obscure points in the pedigrees of the best families of Burgundy.

Chapter 20

The Anonymous Letters

Do not give dalliance

Too much the rein; the strongest oaths are straw

To the fire i'the blood.

The Tempest

As they left the drawing-room about midnight, Julien found time to say to his mistress: 'Do not let us meet tonight, your husband has suspicions; I would swear that that long letter he was reading with such displeasure is an anonymous one.'

Fortunately, Julien locked himself into his room. Madame de Renal conceived the mad idea that this warning was simply a pretext for not coming to see her. She lost her head absolutely, and at the usual hour came to his door. Julien, hearing a sound in the corridor, instantly blew out his lamp. Someone was attempting to open his door; was it Madame de Renal, was it a jealous husband?

Early the next morning, the cook, who took an interest in Julien, brought him a book on the cover of which he read these words written in Italian: Guardate alia pagina 130.

Julien shuddered at the imprudence, turned to page one hundred and thirty and found fastened to it with a pin the following letter written in haste, bedewed with tears, and without the least attempt at spelling. Ordinarily

Madame de Renal spelt quite well; he was moved by this detail and began to forget the frightful imprudence.

‘So you would not let me in tonight? There are moments when I feel that I have never seen into the depths of your heart. Your look frightens me. I am afraid of you. Great God! Can it be, you have never loved me? In that case, my husband can discover our love, and shut me up in lifelong imprisonment, in the country, apart from my children. Perhaps God wills it so. I shall soon die; but you will be a monster.

‘Do you not love me? Are you tired of my follies, of my remorse, impious one? Do you wish to ruin me? I give you an easy method. Go, show this letter to all Verrieres, or rather show it to M. Valenod alone. Tell him that I love you; but no, utter no such blasphemy; tell him that I adore you, that life only began for me on the day when I first saw you; that in the wildest moments of my girlhood, I had never even dreamed of the happiness that I owe to you; that I have sacrificed my life to you, that I am sacrificing my soul to you. You know that I am sacrificing far more.

‘But what does he know of sacrifices, that man? Tell him, tell him, to make him angry, that I defy all evil-speakers, and that there is but one misfortune in the world for me, that of beholding a change in the one man who holds me to life. What a blessing for me to lose it, to offer it in sacrifice, and to fear no longer for my children!

‘Doubt not, dear friend, if there be an anonymous letter, it comes from that odious being who, for the last six years, has pursued me with his loud voice, with a list of the jumps his horse has taken, with his fatuity and with the endless enumeration of all his advantages.

‘Is there an anonymous letter? Wicked one, that is what I wished to discuss with you; but no, you were right. Clasping you in my arms, for the last time perhaps, I could never have discussed the matter calmly, as I do when I am alone. From this moment our happiness will not be so easily secured. Will that be an annoyance to you? Yes, on the days when you have not received some amusing book from M. Fouque. The sacrifice is made; tomorrow, whether there be an anonymous letter or not, I shall tell my husband that I have received an anonymous letter, that he must instantly offer you a large

sum to accept another post, find some decent pretext, and send you back without delay to your family.

‘Alas, dear friend, we are going to be parted for a fortnight, perhaps a month! But there, I do you justice, you will suffer as much as I. Still, this is the only way to counteract the effect of this anonymous letter; it is not the first that my husband has received, and on my account too. Alas! How I have laughed at them!

‘The whole purpose of my scheme is to make my husband think that the letter comes from M. Valenod; I have no doubt that he is its author. If you leave the house, do not fail to go and establish yourself at Verrieres. I shall contrive that my husband conceives the idea of spending a fortnight there, to prove to the fools that there is no coolness between him and myself. Once you are at Verrieres, make friends with everyone, even the Liberals. I know that all the ladies will run after you.

‘Do not go and quarrel with M. Valenod, nor crop his ears, as you once threatened; on the contrary, show him every politeness. The essential thing is that it should be known throughout Verrieres that you are going to Valenod’s, or to some other house, for the children’s education.

‘That is what my husband will never stand. Should he resign himself to it, well, at least you will be living in Verrieres, and I shall see you sometimes. My children, who are so fond of you, will go to see you. Great God! I feel that I love my children more, because they love you. What remorse! How is all this going to end? I am wandering . . . Well, you understand what you must do; be gentle, polite, never contemptuous with these vulgar personages, I implore you on my knees: they are to be the arbiters of our destiny. Doubt not for a moment that my husband in dealing with you will conform to whatever public opinion may prescribe.

‘It is you that are going to provide me with this anonymous letter; arm yourself with patience and a pair of scissors. Cut out of a book the words you will see below; paste them together, with water-glue, on the sheet of blue paper that I send you; it came to me from M. Valenod. Be prepared for a search of your room; burn the pages of the book you mutilate. If you do not find the words ready made, have the patience to compose them letter by

letter. To spare you trouble, I have cut the anonymous letter short. Alas! If you no longer love me, as I fear, how long mine must seem to you!

ANONYMOUS LETTER

“MADAME,

All your little goings on are known; but the persons to whose interest it is to check them have been warned. From a lingering affection for yourself, I beg you to detach yourself entirely from the little peasant. If you have the wisdom to do this, your husband will believe that the warning he has received was misleading, and he will be left in his error. Bear in mind that I know your secret; tremble, unhappy woman; henceforward you must tread a straight path, driven by me.”

‘As soon as you have finished pasting together the words that make up this letter (do you recognise the Governor’s style in it?) come out of your room, I shall meet you about the house.

‘I shall go to the village, and return with a troubled countenance; I shall indeed be greatly troubled. Great God! What a risk I am running, and all because you thought you detected an anonymous letter. Finally, with a woebegone face, I shall give my husband this letter, which will have been handed to me by a stranger. As for you, go for a walk in the direction of the woods with the children, and do not return until dinner time.

‘From the rocks above, you can see the tower of the dovecote. If all goes well, I shall place a white handkerchief there; if not, you will see nothing.

‘Ungrateful wretch, will not your heart find out some way of telling me that you love me, before starting on this walk? Whatever may befall me, be certain of one thing: I should not survive for a day a final parting. Ah! bad mother! These are two idle words that I have written, dear Julien. I do not feel them; I can think only of you at this moment, I have written them only so as not to be blamed by you. Now that I find myself brought to the point of losing you, what use is there in pretence? Yes, let my heart seem black as night to you, but let me not lie to the man whom I adore! I have been all too deceitful already in my life. Go to, I forgive you if you love me no longer. I

have not time to read my letter through. It is a small thing in my eyes to pay with my life for the happy days which I have spent in your arms. You know that they will cost me more than life.'

Chapter 21

Conversation with a Lord and Master

Alas! our frailty is the cause, not we! For such as we are made of, such we be.

Twelfth Night

It was with a childish pleasure that Julien spent an hour in pasting words together. As he left his room he came upon his pupils and their mother; she took the letter with a simplicity and courage, the calmness of which terrified him.

‘Is the gum quite dry?’ she asked him.

‘Can this be the woman who was being driven mad by remorse?’ he thought. ‘What are her plans at this moment?’ He was too proud to ask her; but never, perhaps, had she appealed to him more strongly.

‘If things go amiss,’ she went on with the same coolness, ‘I shall be stripped of everything. Bury this store somewhere in the mountains; it may some day be my last resource.’

She handed him a glass-topped case, in red morocco, filled with gold and a few diamonds.

‘Go now,’ she said to him.

She embraced her children, the youngest of them twice over. Julien stood spellbound. She left him at a rapid pace and without looking at him again.

>From the moment of his opening the anonymous letter, M. de Renal's life had been a burden to him. He had not been so agitated since a duel that he had nearly had to fight in 1816, and, to do him justice, the prospect of receiving a bullet in his person would now have distressed him less. He examined the letter from every angle. 'Is not this a woman's hand?' he asked himself. 'In that case, what woman can have written it?' He considered in turn all the women he knew at Verrieres, without finding a definite object for his suspicions. Could a man have dictated the letter? If so, what man? Here again, a similar uncertainty; he had earned the jealousy and no doubt the hatred of the majority of the men he knew. 'I must consult my wife,' he said to himself, from force of habit, as he rose from the armchair in which he had collapsed.

No sooner had he risen than 'Good God!' he exclaimed, clapping his hand to his head, 'she is the one person whom I cannot trust; from this moment she is my enemy.' And tears of anger welled into his eyes.

It was a fitting reward for that barrenness of heart in which practical wisdom in the provinces is rooted, that the two men whom, at that moment, M. de Renal most dreaded were his two most intimate friends.

'Apart from them, I have ten friends perhaps,' and he turned them over in his mind, calculating the exact amount of comfort that he would be able to derive from each. 'To all of them, to all of them,' he cried in his rage, 'my appalling misfortune will give the most intense pleasure.' Happily for him, he supposed himself to be greatly envied, and not without reason. Apart from his superb house in town on which the King of —— had just conferred everlasting honour by sleeping beneath its roof, he had made an admirable piece of work of his country house at Vergy. The front was painted white, and the windows adorned with handsome green shutters. He was comforted for a moment by the thought of this magnificence. The fact of the matter was that this mansion was visible from a distance of three or four leagues, to the great detriment of all the country houses or so-called chateaux of the neighbourhood, which had been allowed to retain the humble grey tones imparted to them by time.

M. de Renal could reckon upon the tears and pity of one of his friends, the churchwarden of the parish; but he was an imbecile who shed tears at

everything. This man was nevertheless his sole resource.

‘What misfortune is comparable to mine?’ he exclaimed angrily. ‘What isolation!

‘Is it possible,’ this truly pitiable man asked himself, ‘is it possible that, in my distress, I have not a single friend of whom to ask advice? For my mind is becoming unhinged, I can feel it! Ah, Falcoz! Ah, Ducros!’ he cried bitterly. These were the names of two of his boyhood’s friends whom he had alienated by his arrogance in 1814. They were not noble, and he had tried to alter the terms of equality on which they had been living all their lives.

One of them, Falcoz, a man of spirit and heart, a paper merchant at Verrieres, had purchased a printing press in the chief town of the Department and had started a newspaper. The Congregation had determined to ruin him: his paper had been condemned, his printer’s licence had been taken from him. In these unfortunate circumstances he ventured to write to M. de Renal for the first time in ten years. The Mayor of Verrieres felt it incumbent on him to reply in the Ancient Roman style: ‘If the King’s Minister did me the honour to consult me, I should say to him: “Ruin without compunction all provincial printers, and make printing a monopoly like the sale of tobacco.”’ This letter to an intimate friend which had set the whole of Verrieres marvelling at the time, M. de Renal now recalled, word for word, with horror. ‘Who would have said that with my rank, my fortune, my Crosses, I should one day regret it?’ It was in such transports of anger, now against himself, now against all around him, that he passed a night of anguish; but, fortunately, it did not occur to him to spy upon his wife.

‘I am used to Louise,’ he said to himself, ‘she knows all my affairs; were I free to marry again tomorrow I could find no one fit to take her place.’ Next, he sought relief in the idea that his wife was innocent; this point of view made it unnecessary for him to show his strength of character, and was far more convenient; how many slandered wives have we not all seen!

‘But what!’ he suddenly exclaimed, pacing the floor with a convulsive step, ‘am I to allow her, as though I were a man of straw, a mere ragamuffin, to make a mock of me with her lover? Is the whole of Verrieres to be allowed to sneer at my complacency? What have they not said about Charmier?’ (a

notorious local cuckold). ‘When he is mentioned, is there not a smile on every face? He is a good pleader, who is there that ever mentions his talent for public speaking? “Ah! Charmier!” is what they say; “Bernard’s Charmier.” They actually give him the name of the man that has disgraced him.

‘Thank heaven,’ said M. de Renal at other moments, ‘I have no daughter, and the manner in which I am going to punish their mother will not damage the careers of my children; I can surprise that young peasant with my wife, and kill the pair of them; in that event, the tragic outcome of my misfortune may perhaps make it less absurd.’ This idea appealed to him: he worked it out in the fullest detail. ‘The Penal Code is on my side, and, whatever happens, our Congregation and my friends on the jury will save me.’ He examined his hunting knife, which had a keen blade; but the thought of bloodshed frightened him.

‘I might thrash this insolent tutor black and blue and turn him from the house; but what a stir in Verrieres and, indeed, throughout the Department! After the suppression of Falcoz’s paper, when his editor came out of prison, I was instrumental in making him lose a place worth six hundred francs. They say that the scribbler has dared to show his face again in Besancon, he may easily attack me, and so cunningly that it will be impossible to bring him to justice! That insolent fellow will insinuate in a thousand ways that he has been speaking the truth. A man of family, who respects his rank as I do, is always hated by plebeians. I shall see myself in those frightful Paris papers; my God! what degradation! To see the ancient name of Renal plunged in the mire of ridicule . . . If I ever travel, I shall have to change my name; what! give up this name which is my pride and my strength. What a crowning infamy!

‘If I do not kill my wife, if I drive her from the house with ignominy, she has her aunt at Besancon, who will hand over the whole of her fortune to her on the quiet. My wife will go and live in Paris with Julien; Verrieres will hear of it, and I shall again be regarded as a dupe.’ This unhappy man then perceived, from the failing light of his lamp, that day was beginning to break. He went to seek a breath of air in the garden. At that moment, he had almost made up his mind to create no scene, chiefly because a scene of that sort would fill his good friends at Verrieres with joy.

His stroll in the garden calmed him somewhat. ‘No,’ he cried, ‘I shall certainly not part with my wife, she is too useful to me.’ He pictured to himself with horror what his house would be like without his wife; his sole female relative was the Marquise de R —— who was old, idiotic and evil-minded.

An idea of the greatest good sense occurred to him, but to put it into practice required a strength of character far exceeding the little that the poor man possessed. ‘If I keep my wife,’ he said to himself; ‘I know my own nature; one day, when she taxes my patience, I shall reproach her with her offence. She is proud, we are bound to quarrel, and all this will happen before she has inherited her aunt’s estate. And then, how they will all laugh at me! My wife loves her children, it will all come to them in the end. But I, I shall be the talk of Verrieres. What, they will say, he couldn’t even punish his wife! Would it not be better to stick to my suspicions and to verify nothing? Then I tie my own hands, I cannot afterwards reproach her with anything.’

A moment later M. de Renal, his wounded vanity once more gaining the mastery, was laboriously recalling all the stories told in the billiard-room of the Casino or Noble Club of Verrieres, when some fluent talker interrupted the pool to make merry at the expense of some cuckolded husband. How cruel, at that moment, those pleasantries seemed.

‘God! Why is not my wife dead! Then I should be immune from ridicule. Why am I not a widower! I should go and spend six months in Paris in the best society.’ After this momentary happiness caused by the idea of widowhood, his imagination returned to the methods of ascertaining the truth. Should he at midnight, after the whole household had gone to bed, sprinkle a few handfuls of bran outside the door of Julien’s room? Next morning, at daybreak, he would see the footprints on it.

‘But that would be no good,’ he broke out angrily, ‘that wretched Elisa would notice it, and it would be all over the house at once that I am jealous.’

In another story that circulated at the Casino, a husband had made certain of his plight by fastening a hair with a little wax so as to seal up the doors of his wife’s room and her lover’s.

After so many hours of vacillation, this method of obtaining enlightenment seemed to him decidedly the best, and he was thinking of adopting it, when at a bend in the path he came upon that wife whom he would have liked to see dead.

She was returning from the village. She had gone to hear mass in the church of Vergy. A tradition of extremely doubtful value in the eyes of the cold philosopher, but one in which she believed, made out that the little church now in use had been the chapel of the castle of the Lord of Vergy. This thought obsessed Madame de Renal throughout the time which she had meant to pass in prayer in this church. She kept on picturing to herself her husband killing Julien during the chase, as though by accident, and afterwards, that evening, making her eat his heart.

'My fate,' she said to herself, 'depends on what he will think when he hears me. After these terrible moments, perhaps I shall not find another opportunity to speak to him. He is not a wise creature, swayed by reason. I might, if he were, with the aid of my own feeble wits, forecast what he would do or say. But my fate lies in my cunning, in the art of directing the thoughts of this whimsical creature, who becomes blind with anger and incapable of seeing things. Great God! I require talent, coolness, where am I to find them?'

She recovered her calm as though by magic on entering the garden and seeing her husband in the distance. The disorder of his hair and clothes showed that he had not slept. She handed him a letter which, though the seal was broken, was still folded. He, without opening it, gazed at his wife with madness in his eyes.

'Here is an abomination,' she said to him, 'which an evil-looking man who claims to know you and that you owe him a debt of gratitude, handed to me as I came past the back of the lawyer's garden. One thing I must ask of you, and that is that you send back to his own people, and without delay, that Monsieur Julien.' Madame de Renal made haste to utter this name, even beginning a little too soon perhaps, in order to rid herself of the fearful prospect of having to utter it.

She was filled with joy on beholding the joy that it gave her husband. >From the fixed stare which he directed at her she realised that Julien had guessed aright. Instead of worrying about a very present trouble, ‘what intelligence,’ she thought to herself. ‘What perfect tact! And in a young man still quite devoid of experience! To what heights will he not rise in time? Alas! Then his success will make him forget me.’

This little act of admiration of the man she adored completely restored her composure.

She congratulated herself on the step she had taken. ‘I have proved myself not unworthy of Julien,’ she said to herself, with a sweet and secret relish.

Without saying a word, for fear of committing himself, M. de Renal examined this second anonymous letter composed, as the reader may remember, of printed words gummed upon a sheet of paper of a bluish tinge. ‘They are making a fool of me in every way,’ M. de Renal said to himself, utterly worn out.

‘Fresh insults to be looked into, and all owing to my wife!’ He was on the point of deluging her with a stream of the coarsest invective; the thought of the fortune awaiting her at Besancon just stopped him. Overpowered by the necessity of venting his anger on something, he tore up the sheet on which this second anonymous letter was gummed, and strode rapidly away, feeling that he could not endure his wife’s company. A minute later, he returned to her, already more calm.

‘We must take action at once and dismiss Julien,’ she immediately began; ‘after all he is only the son of a working man. You can compensate him with a few crowns, besides, he is clever and can easily find another place, with M. Valenod, for instance, or the Sub–Prefect Maugiron; they both have families. And so you will not be doing him any harm . . .’

‘You speak like the fool that you are,’ cried M. de Renal in a voice of thunder. ‘How can one expect common sense of a woman? You never pay attention to what is reasonable; how should you have any knowledge? Your carelessness, your laziness leave you just enough activity to chase

butterflies, feeble creatures which we are so unfortunate as to have in our households . . .'

Madame de Renal let him speak, and he spoke at length; he passed his anger, as they say in those parts.

'Sir,' she answered him finally, 'I speak as a woman whose honour, that is to say her most priceless possession, has been outraged.'

Madame de Renal preserved an unalterable calm throughout the whole of this trying conversation, upon which depended the possibility of her continuing to live beneath the same roof as Julien. She sought out the ideas that seemed to her best fitted to guide her husband's blind anger. She had remained unmoved by all the insulting remarks that he had addressed to her, she did not hear them, she was thinking all the time of Julien. 'Will he be pleased with me?'

'This little peasant upon whom we have lavished every attention, including presents, may be innocent,' she said at length, 'but he is none the less the occasion of the first insult I have ever received . . . Sir, when I read that abominable document, I vowed that either he or I should leave your roof.'

'Do you wish to create a scandal that will dishonour me and yourself as well? You'll be giving a fine treat to many people in Verrieres.'

'That is true; they are all jealous of the state of prosperity to which your wise management has brought you, your family and the town . . . Very well, I shall go and bid Julien ask you for leave to spend a month with that timber merchant in the mountain, a fit companion for that little workman.'

'Take care what you do,' put in M. de Renal, calmly enough. 'The one thing I must insist on is that you do not speak to him. You would show temper and make him cross with me; you know how touchy the little gentleman is.'

'That young man has no tact,' went on Madame de Renal; 'he may be learned, you know about that, but at bottom he is nothing but a peasant. For my own part, I have never had any opinion of him since he refused to marry Elisa, it was a fortune ready made; and all because now and again she pays a secret visit to M. Valenod.'

‘Ah!’ said M. de Renal, raising his eyebrows as far as they would go, ‘what, did Julien tell you that?’

‘No, not exactly; he has always spoken to me of the vocation that is calling him to the sacred ministry; but believe me, the first vocation for the lower orders is to find their daily bread. He made it fairly clear to me that he was not unaware of these secret visits.’

‘And I, I, knew nothing about them!’ cried M. de Renal, all his fury returning, emphasising every word. ‘There are things going on in my house of which I know nothing . . . What! There has been something between Elisa and Valenod?’

‘Oh, that’s an old story, my dear friend,’ Madame de Renal said laughing, ‘and I daresay no harm was done. It was in the days when your good friend Valenod would not have been sorry to have it thought in Verrieres that there was a little love — of a purely platonic sort — exchanged between him and me.’

‘I had that idea at one time,’ cried M. de Renal striking his head in his fury as he advanced from one discovery to another, ‘and you never said a word to me about it?’

‘Was I to make trouble between two friends all for a little outburst of vanity on the part of our dear Governor? What woman is there in society to whom he has not addressed one or more letters, extremely witty and even a trifle gallant?’

‘Has he written to you?’

‘He writes frequently.’

‘Show me his letters this instant, I order you’; and M. de Renal added six feet to his stature.

‘I shall do nothing of the sort,’ the answer came in a tone so gentle as to be almost indifferent, ‘I shall let you see them some other day, when you are more yourself.’

‘This very instant, damn it!’ cried M. de Renal, blind with rage, and yet happier than he had been at any time in the last twelve hours.

‘Will you swear to me,’ said Madame de Renal solemnly, ‘never to quarrel with the Governor of the Poorhouse over these letters?’

‘Quarrel or no quarrel, I can take the foundlings away from him; but,’ he continued, furiously, ‘I want those letters this instant; where are they?’

‘In a drawer in my desk; but you may be certain, I shall not give you the key of it.’

‘I shall be able to force it,’ he cried as he made off in the direction of his wife’s room.

He did indeed break open with an iron bar a valuable mahogany writing desk, imported from Paris, which he used often to polish with the tail of his coat when he thought he detected a spot on its surface.

Madame de Renal meanwhile had run up the hundred and twenty steps of the dovecote; she knotted the corner of a white handkerchief to one of the iron bars of the little window. She was the happiest of women. With tears in her eyes she gazed out at the wooded slopes of the mountain. ‘Doubtless,’ she said to herself, ‘beneath one of those spreading beeches, Julien is watching for this glad signal.’ For long she strained her ears, then cursed the monotonous drone of the grasshoppers and the twitter of the birds. But for those tiresome sounds, a cry of joy, issuing from among the rocks, might have reached her in her tower. Her ravening gaze devoured that immense slope of dusky verdure, unbroken as the surface of a meadow, that was formed by the treetops. ‘How is it he has not the sense,’ she asked herself with deep emotion, ‘to think of some signal to tell me that his happiness is no less than mine?’ She came down from the dovecote only when she began to be afraid that her husband might come up in search of her.

She found him foaming with rage. He was running through M. Valenod’s anodyne sentences, that were little used to being read with such emotion.

Seizing a moment in which a lull in her husband’s exclamations gave her a chance to make herself heard:

‘I cannot get away from my original idea,’ said Madame de Renal, ‘Julien ought to go for a holiday. Whatever talent he may have for Latin, he is nothing more, after all, than a peasant who is often coarse and wanting in tact; every day, thinking he is being polite, he plies me with extravagant compliments in the worst of taste, which he learns by heart from some novel . . .’

‘He never reads any,’ cried M. de Renal; ‘I am positive as to that. Do you suppose that I am a blind master who knows nothing of what goes on under his roof?’

‘Very well, if he doesn’t read those absurd compliments anywhere, he invents them, which is even worse. He will have spoken of me in that tone in Verrieres; and, without going so far,’ said Madame de Renal, with the air of one making a discovery, ‘he will have spoken like that before Elisa, which is just as though he had spoken to M. Valenod.’

‘Ah!’ cried M. de Renal, making the table and the whole room shake with one of the stoutest blows that human fist ever gave, ‘the anonymous letter in print and Valenod’s letters were all on the same paper.’

‘At last!’ thought Madame de Renal; she appeared thunderstruck by this discovery, and without having the courage to add a single word went and sat down on the divan, at the farther end of the room.

The battle was now won; she had her work cut out to prevent M. de Renal from going and talking to the supposed author of the anonymous letter.

‘How is it you do not feel that to make a scene, without sufficient proof, with M. Valenod would be the most deplorable error? If you are envied, Sir, who is to blame? Your own talents: your wise administration, the buildings you have erected with such good taste, the dowry I brought you, and above all the considerable fortune we may expect to inherit from my worthy aunt, a fortune the extent of which is vastly exaggerated, have made you the principal person in Verrieres.’

‘You forget my birth,’ said M. de Renal, with a faint smile.

‘You are one of the most distinguished gentlemen in the province,’ Madame de Renal hastily added; ‘if the King were free and could do justice to birth, you would doubtless be figuring in the House of Peers,’ and so forth. ‘And in this magnificent position do you seek to provide jealousy with food for comment?

‘To speak to M. Valenod of his anonymous letter is to proclaim throughout Verrieres, or rather in Besancon, throughout the Province, that this petty cit, admitted perhaps imprudently to the friendship of a Renal, has found out a way to insult him. Did these letters which you have just discovered prove that I had responded to M. Valenod’s overtures, then it would be for you to kill me, I should have deserved it a hundred times, but not to show anger with him. Think that all your neighbours only await a pretext to be avenged for your superiority; think that in 1816 you were instrumental in securing certain arrests. That man who took refuge on your roof . . .’

‘What I think is that you have neither respect nor affection for me,’ shouted M. de Renal with all the bitterness that such a memory aroused, ‘and I have not been made a Peer!’

‘I think, my friend,’ put in Madame de Renal with a smile, ‘that I shall one day be richer than you, that I have been your companion for twelve years, and that on all these counts I ought to have a voice in your councils, especially in this business today. If you prefer Monsieur Julien to me,’ she added with ill-concealed scorn, ‘I am prepared to go and spend the winter with my aunt.’

This threat was uttered with gladness. It contained the firmness which seeks to cloak itself in courtesy; it determined M. de Renal. But, obeying the provincial custom, he continued to speak for a long time, harked back to every argument in turn; his wife allowed him to speak, there was still anger in his tone. At length, two hours of futile discourse wore out the strength of a man who had been helpless with rage all night. He determined upon the line of conduct which he was going to adopt towards M. Valenod, Julien, and even Elisa.

Once or twice, during this great scene, Madame de Renal came within an ace of feeling a certain sympathy for the very real distress of this man who for

ten years had been her friend. But our true passions are selfish. Moreover she was expecting every moment an avowal of the anonymous letter which he had received overnight, and this avowal never came. To gain complete confidence, Madame de Renal required to know what ideas might have been suggested to the man upon whom her fate depended. For, in the country, husbands control public opinion. A husband who denounces his wife covers himself with ridicule, a thing that every day is becoming less dangerous in France; but his wife, if he does not supply her with money, declines to the position of a working woman at fifteen sous daily, and even then the virtuous souls have scruples about employing her.

An odalisque in the seraglio may love the Sultan with all her heart; he is all powerful, she has no hope of evading his authority by a succession of clever little tricks. The master's vengeance is terrible, bloody, but martial and noble: a dagger blow ends everything. It is with blows dealt by public contempt that a husband kills his wife in the nineteenth century; it is by shutting the doors of all the drawing-rooms in her face.

The sense of danger was keenly aroused in Madame de Renal on her return to her own room; she was horrified by the disorder in which she found it. The locks of all her pretty little boxes had been broken; several planks in the floor had been torn up. 'He would have been without pity for me!' she told herself. 'To spoil so this floor of coloured parquet, of which he is so proud; when one of his children comes in with muddy shoes, he flushes with rage. And now it is ruined for ever!' The sight of this violence rapidly silenced the last reproaches with which she had been blaming herself for her too rapid victory.

Shortly before the dinner bell sounded, Julien returned with the children. At dessert, when the servants had left the room, Madame de Renal said to him very drily:

'You expressed the desire to me to go and spend a fortnight at Verrieres; M. de Renal is kind enough to grant you leave. You can go as soon as you please. But, so that the children shall not waste any time, their lessons will be sent to you every day, for you to correct.'

‘Certainly,’ M. de Renal added in a most bitter tone, ‘I shall not allow you more than a week.’

Julien read in his features the uneasiness of a man in cruel torment.

‘He has not yet come to a decision,’ he said to his mistress, during a moment of solitude in the drawing-room.

Madame de Renal informed him rapidly of all that she had done since the morning.

‘The details tonight,’ she added laughing.

‘The perversity of woman!’ thought Julien. ‘What pleasure, what instinct leads them to betray us?

‘I find you at once enlightened and blinded by your love,’ he said to her with a certain coldness; ‘your behaviour today has been admirable; but is there any prudence in our attempting to see each other tonight? This house is paved with enemies; think of the passionate hatred that Elisa has for me.’

‘That hatred greatly resembles the passionate indifference that you must have for me.’

‘Indifferent or not, I am bound to save you from a peril into which I have plunged you. If chance decrees that M. de Renal speaks to Elisa, by a single word she may disclose everything to him. What is to prevent him from hiding outside my room, well armed . . .’

‘What! Lacking in courage even!’ said Madame de Renal, with all the pride of a woman of noble birth.

‘I shall never sink so low as to speak of my courage,’ said Julien coldly, ‘that is mean. Let the world judge by my actions. But,’ he went on, taking her hand, ‘you cannot conceive how attached I am to you, and what a joy it is to me to be able to take leave of you before this cruel parting.’

Chapter 22

Manners and Customs in 1830

Speech was given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts.

MALAGRIDA, S.J.

The first thing that Julien did on arriving in Verrieres was to reproach himself for his unfairness to Madame de Renal. ‘I should have despised her as a foolish woman if from weakness she had failed to bring off the scene with M. de Renal! She carried it through like a diplomat, and my sympathies are with the loser, who is my enemy. There is a streak of middle-class pettiness in my nature; my vanity is hurt, because M. de Renal is a man! That vast and illustrous corporation to which I have the honour to belong; I am a perfect fool.’

M. Chelan had refused the offers of hospitality which the most respected Liberals of the place had vied with one another in making him, when his deprivation drove him from the presbytery. The pair of rooms which he had taken were littered with his books. Julien, wishing to show Verrieres what it meant to be a priest, went and fetched from his father’s store a dozen planks of firwood, which he carried on his back the whole length of the main street. He borrowed some tools from an old friend and had soon constructed a sort of bookcase in which he arranged M. Chelan’s library.

‘I supposed you to have been corrupted by the vanity of the world,’ said the old man, shedding tears of joy; ‘this quite redeems the childishness of that dazzling guard of honour uniform which made you so many enemies.’

M. de Renal had told Julien to put up in his house. No one had any suspicion of what had happened. On the third day after his arrival, there came up to his room no less a personage than the Sub–Prefect, M. de Maugiron. It was only after two solid hours of insipid tittle-tattle, and long jeremiads on the wickedness of men, on the lack of honesty in the people entrusted with the administration of public funds, on the dangers besetting poor France, etc., etc., that Julien saw him come at length to the purpose of his visit. They were already on the landing, and the poor tutor, on the verge of disgrace, was ushering out with all due respect the future Prefect of some fortunate Department, when it pleased the latter gentleman to occupy himself with Julien's career, to praise his moderation where his own interests were concerned, etc., etc. Finally M. de Maugiron, taking him in his arms in the most fatherly manner, suggested to him that he should leave M. de Renal and enter the household of an official who had children to educate, and who, like King Philip, would thank heaven, not so much for having given him them as for having caused them to be born in the neighbourhood of M. Julien. Their tutor would receive a salary of eight hundred francs, payable not month by month, 'which is not noble,' said M. de Maugiron, but quarterly, and in advance to boot.

It was now the turn of Julien who, for an hour and a half, had been waiting impatiently for an opportunity to speak. His reply was perfect, and as long as a pastoral charge; it let everything be understood, and at the same time said nothing definite. A listener would have found in it at once respect for M. de Renal, veneration for the people of Verrieres and gratitude towards the illustrious Sub–Prefect. The said Sub–Prefect, astonished at finding a bigger Jesuit than himself, tried in vain to obtain something positive. Julien, overjoyed, seized the opportunity to try his skill and began his answer over again in different terms. Never did the most eloquent Minister, seeking to monopolise the last hours of a sitting when the Chamber seems inclined to wake up, say less in more words. As soon as M. de Maugiron had left him, Julien broke out in helpless laughter. To make the most of his Jesuitical bent, he wrote a letter of nine pages to M. de Renal, in which he informed him of everything that had been said to him, and humbly asked his advice. 'Why, that rascal never even told me the name of the person who is making the offer! It will be M. Valenod, who sees in my banishment to Verrieres the effect of his anonymous letter.'

His missive dispatched, Julien, as happy as a hunter who at six in the morning on a fine autumn day emerges upon a plain teeming with game, went out to seek the advice of M. Chelan. But before he arrived at the good cure's house, heaven, which was anxious to shower its blessings on him, threw him into the arms of M. Valenod, from whom he did not conceal the fact that his heart was torn; a penniless youth like himself was bound to devote himself entirely to the vocation which heaven had placed in his heart, but a vocation was not everything in this vile world. To be a worthy labourer in the Lord's vineyard, and not to be altogether unworthy of all one's learned fellow-labourers, one required education; one required to spend in the seminary at Besancon two very expensive years; it became indispensable, therefore, to save money, which was considerably easier with a salary of eight hundred francs paid quarterly, than with six hundred francs which melted away month by month. On the other hand, did not heaven, by placing him with the Renal boys, and above all by inspiring in him a particular attachment to them, seem to indicate to him that it would be a mistake to abandon this form of education for another? . . .

Julien arrived at such a pitch of perfection in this kind of eloquence, which has taken the place of the swiftness of action of the Empire, that he ended by growing tired of the sound of his own voice.

Returning to the house he found one of M. Valenod's servants in full livery, who had been looking for him all over the town, with a note inviting him to dinner that very day.

Never had Julien set foot in the man's house; only a few days earlier, his chief thought was how he might give him a thorough good thrashing without subsequent action by the police. Although dinner was not to be until one o'clock, Julien thought it more respectful to present himself at half past twelve in the study of the Governor of the Poorhouse. He found him displaying his importance amid a mass of papers. His huge black whiskers, his enormous quantity of hair, his night-cap poised askew on the top of his head, his immense pipe, his embroidered slippers, the heavy gold chains slung across his chest in every direction, and all the equipment of a provincial financier, who imagines himself to be a ladies' man, made not the slightest impression upon Julien; he only thought all the more of the thrashing that he owed him.

He craved the honour of being presented to Madame Valenod; she was making her toilet and could not see him. To make up for this, he had the privilege of witnessing that of the Governor of the Poorhouse. They then proceeded to join Madame Valenod, who presented her children to him with tears in her eyes. This woman, one of the most important people in Verrieres, had a huge masculine face, which she had plastered with rouge for this great ceremony. She displayed all the pathos of maternal feelings.

Julien thought of Madame de Renal. His distrustful nature made him scarcely susceptible to any memories save those that are evoked by contrast, but such memories moved him to tears. This tendency was increased by the sight of the Governor's house. He was taken through it. Everything in it was sumptuous and new, and he was told the price of each article. But Julien felt that there was something mean about it, a taint of stolen money. Everyone, even the servants, wore a bold air that seemed to be fortifying them against contempt.

The collector of taxes, the receiver of customs, the chief constable and two or three other public officials arrived with their wives. They were followed by several wealthy Liberals. Dinner was announced. Julien, already in the worst of humours, suddenly reflected that on the other side of the dining-room wall there were wretched prisoners, whose rations of meat had perhaps been squeezed to purchase all this tasteless splendour with which his hosts sought to dazzle him.

'They are hungry perhaps at this moment,' he said to himself; his throat contracted, he found it impossible to eat and almost to speak. It was much worse a quarter of an hour later; they could hear in the distance a few snatches of a popular and, it must be admitted, not too refined song which one of the inmates was singing. M. Valenod glanced at one of his men in full livery, who left the room, and presently the sound of singing ceased. At that moment, a footman offered Julien some Rhine wine in a green glass, and Madame Valenod took care to inform him that this wine cost nine francs the bottle, direct from the grower. Julien, the green glass in his hand, said to M. Valenod:

'I don't hear that horrid song any more.'

‘Gad! I should think not, indeed,’ replied the Governor triumphantly. ‘I’ve made the rascal shut up.’

This was too much for Julien; he had acquired the manners but had not yet the heart appropriate to his station. Despite all his hypocrisy, which he kept in such constant practice, he felt a large tear trickle down his cheek.

He tried to hide it with the green glass, but it was simply impossible for him to do honour to the Rhine wine. ‘Stop the man singing!’ he murmured to himself, ‘O my God, and Thou permittest it!’

Fortunately for him, no one noticed his ill-bred emotion. The collector of taxes had struck up a royalist ditty. During the clamour of the refrain, sung in chorus: ‘There,’ Julien’s conscience warned him, ‘you have the sordid fortune which you will achieve, and you will enjoy it only in these conditions and in such company as this! You will have a place worth perhaps twenty thousand francs, but it must be that while you gorge to repletion you stop the poor prisoner from singing; you will give dinner parties with the money you have filched from his miserable pittance, and during your dinner he will be more wretched still! O Napoleon! How pleasant it was in your time to climb to fortune through the dangers of a battle; but meanly to intensify the sufferings of the wretched!’

I admit that the weakness which Julien displays in this monologue gives me a poor opinion of him. He would be a worthy colleague for those conspirators in yellow gloves, who profess to reform all the conditions of life in a great country, and would be horrified at having to undergo the slightest inconvenience themselves.

Julien was sharply recalled to his proper part. It was not that he might dream and say nothing that he had been invited to dine in such good company.

A retired calico printer, a corresponding member of the Academy of Besancon and of that of Uzes, was speaking to him, down the whole length of the table, inquiring whether all that was commonly reported as to his astonishing prowess in the study of the New Testament was true.

A profound silence fell instantly; a New Testament appeared as though by magic in the hands of the learned member of the two academies. Julien having answered in the affirmative, a few words in Latin were read out to him at random. He began to recite: his memory did not betray him, and this prodigy was admired with all the noisy energy of the end of a dinner. Julien studied the glowing faces of the women. Several of them were not ill-looking. He had made out the wife of the collector who sang so well.

'Really, I am ashamed to go on speaking Latin so long before these ladies,' he said, looking at her. 'If M. Rubigneau' (this was the member of the two academies) 'will be so good as to read out any sentence in Latin, instead of going on with the Latin text, I shall endeavour to improvise a translation.'

This second test set the crown of glory on his achievement.

There were in the room a number of Liberals, men of means, but the happy fathers of children who were capable of winning bursaries, and in this capacity suddenly converted after the last Mission. Despite this brilliant stroke of policy, M. de Renal had never consented to have them in his house. These worthy folk, who knew Julien only by reputation and from having seen him on horseback on the day of the King of — —'s visit, were his most vociferous admirers. 'When will these fools tire of listening to this Biblical language, of which they understand nothing?' he thought. On the contrary, this language amused them by its unfamiliarity; they laughed at it. But Julien had grown tired.

He rose gravely as six o'clock struck and mentioned a chapter of the new theology of Liguori, which he had to learn by heart in order to repeat it next day to M. Chelan. 'For my business,' he added pleasantly, 'is to make other people repeat lessons, and to repeat them myself.'

His audience laughed heartily and applauded; this is the kind of wit that goes down at Verrieres. Julien was by this time on his feet, everyone else rose, regardless of decorum; such is the power of genius. Madame Valenod kept him for a quarter of an hour longer; he really must hear the children repeat their catechism; they made the most absurd mistakes which he alone noticed. He made no attempt to correct them. 'What ignorance of the first principles of religion,' he thought. At length he said good-bye and thought that he

might escape; but the children must next attempt one of La Fontaine's Fables.

'That author is most immoral,' Julien said to Madame Valenod; 'in one of his Fables on Messire Jean Chouart, he has ventured to heap ridicule on all that is most venerable. He is strongly reproved by the best commentators.'

Before leaving the house Julien received four or five invitations to dinner. 'This young man does honour to the Department,' his fellow-guests, in great hilarity, were all exclaiming at once. They went so far as to speak of a pension voted out of the municipal funds, to enable him to continue his studies in Paris.

While this rash idea was making the dining-room ring, Julien had stolen away to the porch. 'Oh, what scum! What scum!' he murmured three or four times, as he treated himself to the pleasure of drinking in the fresh air.

He felt himself a thorough aristocrat for the moment, he who for long had been so shocked by the disdainful smile and the haughty superiority which he found lurking behind all the compliments that were paid him at M. de Renal's. He could not help feeling the extreme difference. 'Even if we forget,' he said to himself as he walked away, 'that the money has been stolen from the poor prisoners, and that they are forbidden to sing as well, would it ever occur to M. de Renal to tell his guests the price of each bottle of wine that he offers them? And this M. Valenod, in going over the list of his property, which he does incessantly, cannot refer to his house, his land and all the rest of it, if his wife is present, without saying your house, your land.'

This lady, apparently so conscious of the joy of ownership, had just made an abominable scene, during dinner, with a servant who had broken a wineglass and spoiled one of her sets; and the servant had answered her with the most gross insolence.

'What a household!' thought Julien; 'if they were to give me half of all the money they steal, I wouldn't live among them. One fine day I should give myself away; I should be unable to keep back the contempt they inspire in me.'

He was obliged, nevertheless, obeying Madame de Renal's orders, to attend several dinners of this sort; Julien was the fashion; people forgave him his uniform and the guard of honour, or rather that imprudent display was the true cause of his success. Soon, the only question discussed in Verrieres was who would be successful in the struggle to secure the learned young man's services, M. de Renal or the Governor of the Poorhouse. These two gentlemen formed with M. Maslon a triumvirate which for some years past had tyrannised the town. People were jealous of the Mayor, the Liberals had grounds for complaint against him; but after all he was noble and created to fill a superior station, whereas M. Valenod's father had not left him an income of six hundred livres. He had been obliged to pass from the stage of being pitied for the shabby apple-green coat in which everybody remembered him in his younger days to that of being envied for his Norman horses, his gold chains, the clothes he ordered from Paris, in short, all his present prosperity.

In the welter of this world so new to Julien he thought he had discovered an honest man; this was a geometrician, was named Gros and was reckoned a Jacobin. Julien, having made a vow never to say anything except what he himself believed to be false, was obliged to make a show of being suspicious of M. Gros. He received from Vergy large packets of exercises. He was advised to see much of his father, and complied with this painful necessity. In a word, he was quite redeeming his reputation, when one morning he was greatly surprised to find himself awakened by a pair of hands which were clapped over his eyes.

It was Madame de Renal who had come in to town and, running upstairs four steps at a time and leaving her children occupied with a favourite rabbit that they had brought with them, had reached Julien's room a minute in advance of them. The moment was delicious but all too brief: Madame de Renal had vanished when the children arrived with the rabbit, which they wanted to show to their friend. Julien welcomed them all, including the rabbit. He seemed to be once more one of a family party; he felt that he loved these children, that it amused him to join in their chatter. He was amazed by the sweetness of their voices, the simplicity and nobility of their manners; he required to wash his imagination clean of all the vulgar behaviour, all the unpleasant thoughts the atmosphere of which he had to breathe at Verrieres. There was always the dread of bankruptcy, wealth and

poverty were always fighting for the upper hand. The people with whom he dined, in speaking of the joint on their table, made confidences humiliating to themselves, and nauseating to their hearers.

‘You aristocrats, you have every reason to be proud,’ he said to Madame de Renal. And he told her of all the dinners he had endured.

‘Why, so you are in the fashion!’ And she laughed heartily at the thought of the rouge which Madame Valenod felt herself obliged to put on whenever she expected Julien. ‘I believe she has designs on your heart,’ she added.

Luncheon was a joy. The presence of the children, albeit apparently a nuisance, increased as a matter of fact the general enjoyment. These poor children did not know how to express their delight at seeing Julien again. The servants had not failed to inform them that he was being offered two hundred francs more to educate the little Valenods.

In the middle of luncheon, Stanislas Xavier, still pale after his serious illness, suddenly asked his mother what was the value of his silver spoon and fork and of the mug out of which he was drinking.

‘Why do you want to know?’

‘I want to sell them to give the money to M. Julien, so that he shan’t be a dupe to stay with us.’

Julien embraced him, the tears standing in his eyes. The mother wept outright, while Julien, who had taken Stanislas on his knees, explained to him that he must not use the word dupe, which, employed in that sense, was a servant’s expression. Seeing the pleasure he was giving Madame de Renal, he tried to explain, by picturesque examples, which amused the children, what was meant by a dupe.

‘I understand,’ said Stanislas, ‘it’s the crow who is silly and drops his cheese, which is picked up by the fox, who is a flatterer.’

Madame de Renal, wild with joy, smothered her children in kisses, which she could hardly do without leaning slightly upon Julien.

Suddenly the door opened; it was M. de Renal. His stern, angry face formed a strange contrast with the innocent gaiety which his presence banished. Madame de Renal turned pale; she felt herself incapable of denying anything. Julien seized the opportunity and, speaking very loud, began to tell the Mayor the incident of the silver mug which Stanislas wanted to sell. He was sure that this story would be ill received. At the first word M. de Renal frowned, from force of habit at the mere name of silver. 'The mention of that metal,' he would say, 'is always a preliminary to some call upon my purse.'

But here there was more than money at stake; there was an increase of his suspicions. The air of happiness which animated his family in his absence was not calculated to improve matters with a man dominated by so sensitive a vanity. When his wife praised the graceful and witty manner in which Julien imparted fresh ideas to his pupils:

'Yes, yes, I know, he is making me odious to my children; it is very easy for him to be a hundred times pleasanter to them than I, who am, after all, the master. Everything tends in these days to bring lawful authority into contempt. Unhappy France!'

Madame de Renal did not stop to examine the implications of her husband's manner. She had just seen the possibility of spending twelve hours in Julien's company. She had any number of purchases to make in the town, and declared that she absolutely must dine in a tavern; in spite of anything her husband might say or do, she clung to her idea. The children were in ecstasies at the mere word tavern, which modern prudery finds such pleasure in pronouncing.

M. de Renal left his wife in the first linen-draper's shop that she entered, to go and pay some calls. He returned more gloomy than in the morning; he was convinced that the whole town was thinking about nothing but himself and Julien. As a matter of fact, no one had as yet allowed him to form any suspicion of the offensive element in the popular comments. Those that had been repeated to the Mayor had dealt exclusively with the question whether Julien would remain with him at six hundred francs or would accept the eight hundred francs offered by the Governor of the Poorhouse.

The said Governor, when he met M. de Renal in society, gave him the cold shoulder. His behaviour was not without a certain subtlety; there is not much thoughtless action in the provinces: sensations are so infrequent there that people suppress them.

M. Valenod was what is called, a hundred leagues from Paris, a faraud; this is a species marked by coarseness and natural effrontery. His triumphant existence, since 1815, had confirmed him in his habits. He reigned, so to speak, at Verrieres, under the orders of M. de Renal; but being far more active, blushing at nothing, interfering in everything, everlastingly going about, writing, speaking, forgetting humiliations, having no personal pretensions, he had succeeded in equalling the credit of his Mayor in the eyes of ecclesiastical authority. M. Valenod had as good as told the grocers of the place: 'Give me the two biggest fools among you'; the lawyers: 'Point me out the two most ignorant'; the officers of health: 'Let me have your two biggest rascals.' When he had collected the most shameless representatives of each profession, he had said to them: 'Let us reign together.'

The manners of these men annoyed M. de Renal. Valenod's coarse nature was offended by nothing, not even when the young abbe Maslon gave him the lie direct in public.

But, in the midst of this prosperity, M. Valenod was obliged to fortify himself by little insolences in points of detail against the harsh truths which he was well aware that everyone was entitled to address to him. His activity had multiplied since the alarms which M. Appert's visit had left in its wake. He had made three journeys to Besancon; he wrote several letters for each mail; he sent others by unknown messengers who came to his house at nightfall. He had been wrong perhaps in securing the deprivation of the old cure Chelan; for this vindictive action had made him be regarded, by several pious ladies of good birth, as a profoundly wicked man. Moreover this service rendered had placed him in the absolute power of the Vicar–General de Frilair, from whom he received strange orders. He had reached this stage in his career when he yielded to the pleasure of writing an anonymous letter. To add to his embarrassment, his wife informed him that she wished to have Julien in the house; the idea appealed to her vanity.

In this situation, M. Valenod foresaw a final rupture with his former confederate M. de Renal. The Mayor would address him in harsh language, which mattered little enough to him; but he might write to Besancon, or even to Paris. A cousin of some Minister or other might suddenly descend upon Verrieres and take over the Governorship of the Poorhouse. M. Valenod thought of making friends with the Liberals; it was for this reason that several of them were invited to the dinner at which Julien recited. He would find powerful support there against the Mayor. But an election might come, and it went without saying that the Poorhouse and a vote for the wrong party were incompatible. The history of these tactics, admirably divined by Madame de Renal, had been imparted to Julien while he gave her his arm to escort her from one shop to another, and little by little had carried them to the Cours de la Fidelite, where they spent some hours, almost as peaceful as the hours at Vergy.

At this period, M. Valenod was seeking to avoid a final rupture with his former chief, by himself adopting a bold air towards him. On the day of which we treat, this system proved successful, but increased the Mayor's ill humour.

Never can vanity, at grips with all the nastiest and shabbiest elements of a petty love of money, have plunged a man in a more wretched state than that in which M. de Renal found himself, at the moment of his entering the tavern. Never, on the contrary, had his children been gayer or more joyful. The contrast goaded him to fury.

'I am not wanted in my own family, so far as I can see!' he said as he entered, in a tone which he sought to make imposing.

By way of reply, his wife drew him aside and explained to him the necessity of getting rid of Julien. The hours of happiness she had just enjoyed had given her back the ease and resolution necessary for carrying out the plan of conduct which she had been meditating for the last fortnight. What really and completely dismayed the poor Mayor of Verrieres was that he knew that people joked publicly in the town at the expense of his attachment to hard cash: M. Valenod was as generous as a robber, whereas he had shown himself in a prudent rather than a brilliant light in the last five or six

subscription lists for the Confraternity of Saint Joseph, the Congregation of Our Lady, the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, and so forth.

Among the country gentlemen of Verrieres and the neighbourhood, skilfully classified in the lists compiled by the collecting Brethren, according to the amount of their offerings, the name of M. de Renal had more than once been seen figuring upon the lowest line. In vain might he protest that he earned nothing. The clergy allow no joking on that subject.

Chapter 23

The Sorrows of an Official

Il piacere di alzar la testa tutto l'anno e ben pagato da certi quarti d'ora che bisogna passar.

CASTI

But let us leave this little man to his little fears; why has he taken into his house a man of feeling, when what he required was the soul of a flunkey? Why does he not know how to select his servants? The ordinary procedure of the nineteenth century is that when a powerful and noble personage encounters a man of feeling, he kills, exiles, imprisons or so humiliates him that the other, like a fool, dies of grief. In this instance it so happens that it is not yet the man of feeling who suffers. The great misfortune of the small towns of France and of elected governments, like that of New York, is an inability to forget that there exist in the world persons like M. de Renal. In a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, these men form public opinion, and public opinion is a terrible force in a country that has the Charter. A man endowed with a noble soul, of generous instincts, who would have been your friend did he not live a hundred leagues away, judges you by the public opinion of your town, which is formed by the fools whom chance has made noble, rich and moderate. Woe to him who distinguishes himself!

Immediately after dinner, they set off again for Vergy; but, two days later, Julien saw the whole family return to Verrieres.

An hour had not gone by before, greatly to his surprise, he discovered that Madame de Renal was making a mystery of something. She broke off her conversations with her husband as soon as he appeared, and seemed almost

to wish him to go away. Julien did not wait to be told twice. He became cold and reserved; Madame de Renal noticed this, and did not seek an explanation. ‘Is she going to provide me with a successor?’ thought Julien. ‘Only the day before yesterday, she was so intimate with me! But they say that this is how great ladies behave. They are like kings, no one receives so much attention as the minister who, on going home, finds the letter announcing his dismissal.’

Julien remarked that in these conversations, which ceased abruptly on his approach, there was frequent mention of a big house belonging to the municipality of Verrieres, old, but large and commodious, and situated opposite the church, in the most valuable quarter of the town. ‘What connection can there be between that house and a new lover?’ Julien asked himself. In his distress of mind, he repeated to himself those charming lines of Francois I, which seemed to him new, because it was not a month since Madame de Renal had taught them to him. At that time, by how many vows, by how many caresses had not each line been proved false!

Souvent femme varie Bien fol est qui s’y fie.

M. de Renal set off by post for Besancon. This journey was decided upon at two hours’ notice, he seemed greatly troubled. On his return, he flung a large bundle wrapped in grey paper on the table.

‘So much for that stupid business,’ he said to his wife.

An hour later, Julien saw the bill-sticker carrying off this large bundle; he followed him hastily. ‘I shall learn the secret at the first street corner.’

He waited impatiently behind the bill-sticker, who with his fat brush was slapping paste on the back of the bill. No sooner was it in its place than Julien’s curiosity read on it the announcement in full detail of the sale by public auction of the lease of that large and old house which recurred so frequently in M. de Renal’s conversations with his wife. The assignation was announced for the following day at two o’clock, in the town hall, on the extinction of the third light. Julien was greatly disappointed; he considered the interval to be rather short: how could all the possible bidders come to know of the sale in time? But apart from this, the bill, which was dated a

fortnight earlier and which he read from beginning to end in three different places, told him nothing.

He went to inspect the vacant house. The porter, who did not see him approach, was saying mysteriously to a friend:

‘Bah! It’s a waste of time. M. Maslon promised him he should have it for three hundred francs; and as the Mayor kicked, he was sent to the Bishop’s Palace, by the Vicar–General de Frilair.’

Julien’s appearance on the scene seemed greatly to embarrass the two cronies, who did not say another word.

Julien did not fail to attend the auction. There was a crowd of people in an ill-lighted room; but everyone eyed his neighbours in a singular fashion. Every eye was fixed on a table, where Julien saw, on a pewter plate, three lighted candle-ends. The crier was shouting: ‘Three hundred francs, gentlemen!’

‘Three hundred francs! It is too bad!’ one man murmured to another. Julien was standing between them. ‘It is worth more than eight hundred; I am going to cover the bid.’

‘It’s cutting off your nose to spite your face. What are you going to gain by bringing M. Maslon, M. Valenod, the Bishop, his terrible Vicar–General de Frilair and the whole of their gang down upon you?’

‘Three hundred and twenty,’ the other shouted.

‘Stupid idiot!’ retorted his neighbour. ‘And here’s one of the Mayor’s spies,’ he added pointing at Julien.

Julien turned sharply to rebuke him for this speech; but the two Franc–Comtois paid no attention to him. Their coolness restored his own. At this moment the last candle-end went out, and the drawling voice of the crier assigned the house for a lease of nine years to M. de Saint–Giraud, chief secretary at the Prefecture of —— , and for three hundred and thirty francs.

As soon as the Mayor had left the room, the discussion began.

‘That’s thirty francs Grogeot’s imprudence has earned for the town,’ said one.

‘But M. de Saint–Giraud,’ came the answer, ‘will have his revenge on Grogeot, he will pass it on.’

‘What a scandal,’ said a stout man on Julien’s left: ‘a house for which I’ld have given, myself, eight hundred francs as a factory, and then it would have been a bargain.’

‘Bah!’ replied a young Liberal manufacturer, ‘isn’t M. de Saint–Giraud one of the Congregation? Haven’t his four children all got bursaries? Poor man! The town of Verrieres is simply bound to increase his income with an allowance of five hundred francs; that is all.’

‘And to think that the Mayor hasn’t been able to stop it!’ remarked a third. ‘For he may be an Ultra, if you like, but he’s not a thief.’

‘He’s not a thief?’ put in another; ‘it’s a regular thieves’ kitchen. Everything goes into a common fund, and is divided up at the end of the year. But there’s young Sorel; let us get away.’

Julien went home in the worst of tempers; he found Madame de Renal greatly depressed.

‘Have you come from the sale?’ she said to him.

‘Yes, Ma’am, where I had the honour to be taken for the Mayor’s spy.’

‘If he had taken my advice, he would have gone away somewhere.’

At that moment, M. de Renal appeared; he was very sombre. Dinner was eaten in silence. M. de Renal told Julien to accompany the children to Vergy; they travelled in unbroken gloom. Madame de Renal tried to comfort her husband.

‘Surely you are accustomed to it, my dear.’

That evening, they were seated in silence round the domestic hearth; the crackle of the blazing beech logs was their sole distraction. It was one of those moments of depression which are to be found in the most united families. One of the children uttered a joyful cry.

‘There’s the bell! The bell!’

‘Egad, if it’s M. de Saint–Giraud come to get hold of me, on the excuse of thanking me, I shall give him a piece of my mind; it’s too bad. It’s Valenod that he has to thank, and it is I who am compromised. What am I going to say if those pestilent Jacobin papers get hold of the story, and make me out a M. Nonante–Cinq?’†

† Footnote by C. K. S. M.: M. Marsan explains this allusion to a satire by Barthelemy at the expense of the Marseilles magistrate Merindol, who in sentencing him to a fine had made use of the Common Southern expression ‘Nonante-cinq’ for ‘Quatre-vingt-quinze.]

A good-looking man, with bushy black whiskers, entered the room at this moment in the wake of the servant.

‘M. le Maire, I am Signor Geronimo. Here is a letter which M. le Chevalier de Beauvaisis, attache at the Embassy at Naples, gave me for you when I came away; it is only nine days ago,’ Signor Geronimo added, with a sprightly air, looking at Madame de Renal. ‘Signor de Beauvaisis, your cousin, and my good friend, Madame, tells me that you know Italian.’

The good humour of the Neapolitan changed this dull evening into one that was extremely gay. Madame de Renal insisted upon his taking supper. She turned the whole house upside down; she wished at all costs to distract Julien’s thoughts from the description of him as a spy which twice in that day he had heard ringing in his ear. Signer Geronimo was a famous singer, a man used to good company, and at the same time the best of company himself, qualities which, in France, have almost ceased to be compatible. He sang after supper a little duet with Madame de Renal. He told charming stories. At one o’clock in the morning the children protested when Julien proposed that they should go to bed.

‘Just this story,’ said the eldest.

‘It is my own, Signorino,’ replied Signer Geronimo. ‘Eight years ago I was, like you, a young scholar in the Conservatorio of Naples, by which I mean that I was your age; for I had not the honour to be the son of the eminent Mayor of the beautiful town of Verrieres.’

This allusion drew a sigh from M. de Renal, who looked at his wife.

‘Signer Zingarelli,’ went on the young singer, speaking with a slightly exaggerated accent which made the children burst out laughing, ‘Signor Zingarelli is an exceedingly severe master. He is not loved at the Conservatorio; but he makes them act always as though they loved him. I escaped whenever I could; I used to go to the little theatre of San Carlino, where I used to hear music fit for the gods: but, O heavens, how was I to scrape together the eight soldi which were the price of admission to the pit? An enormous sum,’ he said, looking at the children, and the children laughed again. ‘Signer Giovannone, the Director of San Carlino, heard me sing. I was sixteen years old. “This boy is a treasure,” he said.

‘“Would you like me to engage you, my friend?” he said to me one day.

‘“How much will you give me?”

‘“Forty ducats a month.” That, gentlemen, is one hundred and sixty francs. I seemed to see the heavens open.

‘“But how,” I said to Giovannone, “am I to persuade the strict Zingarelli to let me go?”

‘“Lascia fare a me.”’

‘Leave it to me!’ cried the eldest of the children.

‘Precisely, young Sir. Signor Giovannone said to me: “First of all, caro, a little agreement.” I signed the paper: he gave me three ducats. I had never seen so much money. Then he told me what I must do.

‘Next day, I demanded an interview with the terrible Signer Zingarelli. His old servant showed me into the room.

‘“What do you want with me, you scapegrace?” said Zingarelli.

‘“Maestro” I told him, “I repent of my misdeeds; never again will I break out of the Conservatorio by climbing over the iron railings. I am going to study twice as hard.”

‘“If I were not afraid of spoiling the finest bass voice I have ever heard, I should lock you up on bread and water for a fortnight, you scoundrel.”

‘“Maestro” I went on, “I am going to be a model to the whole school, credete a me. But I ask one favour of you, if anyone comes to ask for me to sing outside, refuse him. Please say that you cannot allow it.”

‘“And who do you suppose is going to ask for a good for nothing like you? Do you think I shall ever allow you to leave the Conservatorio? Do you wish to make a fool of me? Off with you, off with you!” he said, aiming a kick at my hindquarters, “or it will be bread and water in a cell.”

‘An hour later, Signer Giovannone came to call on the Director.

‘“I have come to ask you to make my fortune,” he began, “let me have Geronimo. If he sings in my theatre this winter I give my daughter in marriage.”

‘“What do you propose to do with the rascal?” Zingarelli asked him. “I won’t allow it. You shan’t have him; besides, even if I consented, he would never be willing to leave the Conservatorio; he’s just told me so himself.”

‘“If his willingness is all that matters,” said Giovannone gravely, producing my agreement from his pocket, “carta canta! Here is his signature.”

‘Immediately Zingarelli, furious, flew to the bell-rope: “Turn Geronimo out of the Conservatorio,” he shouted, seething with rage. So out they turned me, I splitting my sides with laughter. That same evening, I sang the aria del Moltiplico. Polichinelle intends to marry, and counts up on his fingers the

different things he will need for the house, and loses count afresh at every moment.'

'Oh, won't you, Sir, please sing us that air?' said Madame de Renal.

Geronimo sang, and his audience all cried with laughter.

Signor Geronimo did not go to bed until two in the morning, leaving the family enchanted with his good manners, his obliging nature and his gay spirits.

Next day M. and Madame de Renal gave him the letters which he required for the French Court.

'And so, falsehood everywhere,' said Julien. 'There is Signor Geronimo on his way to London with a salary of sixty thousand francs. But for the cleverness of the Director of San Carlino, his divine voice might not have been known and admired for another ten years, perhaps . . . Upon my soul, I would rather be a Geronimo than a Renal. He is not so highly honoured in society, but he has not the humiliation of having to grant leases like that one today, and his is a merry life.'

One thing astonished Julien: the weeks of solitude spent at Verrieres, in M. de Renal's house, had been for him a time of happiness. He had encountered disgust and gloomy thoughts only at the dinners to which he had been invited; in that empty house, was he not free to read, write, meditate, undisturbed? He had not been aroused at every moment from his radiant dreams by the cruel necessity of studying the motions of a base soul, and that in order to deceive it by hypocritical words or actions.

'Could happiness be thus within my reach? . . . The cost of such a life is nothing; I can, as I choose, marry Miss Elisa, or become Fouque's partner . . . But the traveller who has just climbed a steep mountain, sits down on the summit, and finds a perfect pleasure in resting. Would he be happy if he were forced to rest always?'

Madame de Renal's mind was a prey to carking thoughts. In spite of her resolve to the contrary, she had revealed to Julien the whole business of the lease. 'So he will make me forget all my vows!' she thought.

She would have given her life without hesitation to save that of her husband, had she seen him in peril. Hers was one of those noble and romantic natures, for which to see the possibility of a generous action, and not to perform it gives rise to a remorse almost equal to that which one feels for a past crime. Nevertheless, there were dreadful days on which she could not banish the thought of the absolute happiness which she would enjoy, if, suddenly left a widow, she were free to marry Julien.

He loved her children far more than their father; in spite of his strict discipline, he was adored by them. She was well aware that, if she married Julien, she would have to leave this Vergy whose leafy shade was so dear to her. She pictured herself living in Paris, continuing to provide her sons with that education at which everyone marvelled. Her children, she herself, Julien, all perfectly happy.

A strange effect of marriage, such as the nineteenth century has made it! The boredom of married life inevitably destroys love, when love has preceded marriage. And yet, as a philosopher has observed, it speedily brings about, among people who are rich enough not to have to work, an intense boredom with all quiet forms of enjoyment. And it is only dried up hearts, among women, that it does not predispose to love.

The philosopher's observation makes me excuse Madame de Renal, but there was no excuse for her at Verrieres, and the whole town, without her suspecting it, was exclusively occupied with the scandal of her love. Thanks to this great scandal, people that autumn were less bored than usual.

The autumn, the first weeks of winter had soon come and gone. It was time to leave the woods of Vergy. The high society of Verrieres began to grow indignant that its anathemas were making so little impression upon M. de Renal. In less than a week, certain grave personages who made up for their habitual solemnity by giving themselves the pleasure of fulfilling missions of this sort, implanted in him the most cruel suspicions, but without going beyond the most measured terms.

M. Valenod, who was playing a close game, had placed Elisa with a noble and highly respected family, which included five women. Elisa fearing, she said, that she might not find a place during the winter, had asked this family

for only about two thirds of what she was receiving at the Mayor's. Of her own accord, the girl had the excellent idea of going to confess to the retired cure Chelan as well as to the new cure, so as to be able to give them both a detailed account of Julien's amours.

On the morning after his return, at six o'clock, the abbe Chelan sent for Julien:

'I ask you nothing,' he said to him; 'I beg you, and if need be order you to tell me nothing, I insist that within three days you leave either for the Seminary at Besancon or for the house of your friend Fouque, who is still willing to provide a splendid career for you. I have foreseen and settled everything, but you must go, and not return to Verrieres for a year.'

Julien made no answer; he was considering whether his honour ought to take offence at the arrangements which M. Chelan, who after all was not his father, had made for him.

'Tomorrow at this hour I shall have the honour of seeing you again,' he said at length to the cure.

M. Chelan, who reckoned upon overcoming the young man by main force, spoke volubly. His attitude, his features composed in the utmost humility, Julien did not open his mouth.

At length he made his escape, and hastened to inform Madame de Renal, whom he found in despair. Her husband had just been speaking to her with a certain frankness. The natural weakness of his character, seeking encouragement in the prospect of the inheritance from Besancon, had made him decide to regard her as entirely innocent. He had just confessed to her the strange condition in which he found public opinion at Verrieres. The public were wrong, had been led astray by envious ill-wishers, but what was to be done?

Madame de Renal had the momentary illusion that Julien might be able to accept M. Valenod's offer, and remain at Verrieres. But she was no longer the simple, timid woman of the previous year; her fatal passion, her spells of remorse had enlightened her. Soon she had to bear the misery of proving to

herself, while she listened to her husband, that a separation, at any rate for the time being, was now indispensable. ‘Away from me, Julien will drift back into those ambitious projects that are so natural when one has nothing. And I, great God! I am so rich, and so powerless to secure my own happiness! He will forget me. Charming as he is, he will be loved, he will love. Ah, unhappy woman! Of what can I complain? Heaven is just, I have not acquired merit by putting a stop to my crime; it blinds my judgment. It rested with me alone to win over Elisa with a bribe, nothing would have been easier. I did not take the trouble to reflect for a moment, the wild imaginings of love absorbed all my time. And now I perish.’

One thing struck Julien; as he conveyed to Madame de Renal the terrible news of his departure, he was met with no selfish objection. Evidently she was making an effort not to cry.

‘We require firmness, my friend.’

She cut off a lock of her hair.

‘I do not know what is to become of me,’ she said to him, ‘but if I die, promise me that you will never forget my children. Far or near, try to make them grow up honourable men. If there is another revolution, all the nobles will be murdered, their father may emigrate, perhaps, because of that peasant who was killed upon a roof. Watch over the family . . . Give me your hand. Farewell, my friend! These are our last moments together. This great sacrifice made, I hope that in public I shall have the courage to think of my reputation.’

Julien had been expecting despair. The simplicity of this farewell touched him.

‘No, I do not accept your farewell thus. I shall go; they wish it; you wish it yourself. But, three days after my departure, I shall return to visit you by night.’

Madame de Renal’s existence was changed. So Julien really did love her since he had had the idea, of his own accord, of seeing her again. Her bitter grief changed into one of the keenest bursts of joy that she had ever felt in

her life. Everything became easy to her. The certainty of seeing her lover again took from these last moments all their lacerating force. From that instant the conduct, like the features of Madame de Renal was noble, firm, and perfectly conventional.

M. de Renal presently returned; he was beside himself. For the first time he mentioned to his wife the anonymous letter which he had received two months earlier.

'I intend to take it to the Casino, to show them all that it comes from that wretch Valenod, whom I picked up out of the gutter and made into one of the richest citizens of Verrieres. I shall disgrace him publicly, and then fight him. It is going too far.'

'I might be left a widow, great God!' thought Madame de Renal. But almost at the same instant she said to herself: 'If I do not prevent this duel, as I certainly can, I shall be my husband's murderess.'

Never before had she handled his vanity with so much skill. In less than two hours she made him see, always by the use of arguments that had occurred first to him, that he must show himself friendlier than ever towards M. Valenod, and even take Elisa into the house again. Madame de Renal required courage to make up her mind to set eyes on this girl, the cause of all her troubles. But the idea had come to her from Julien.

Finally, after having been set three or four times in the right direction, M. de Renal arrived of his own accord at the idea (highly distressing, from the financial point of view) that the most unpleasant thing that could happen for himself was that Julien, amid the seething excitement and gossip of the whole of Verrieres, should remain there as tutor to M. Valenod's children. It was obviously in Julien's interest to accept the offer made him by the Governor of the Poorhouse. It was essential however to M. de Renal's fair fame that Julien should leave Verrieres to enter the seminary at Besancon or at Dijon. But how was he to be made to agree, and after that how was he to maintain himself there?

M. de Renal, seeing the imminence of a pecuniary sacrifice, was in greater despair than his wife. For her part, after this conversation, she was in the

position of a man of feeling who, weary of life, has taken a dose of stramonium; he ceases to act, save, so to speak, automatically, and no longer takes an interest in anything. Thus Louis XIV on his deathbed was led to say: ‘When I was king.’ An admirable speech!

On the morrow, at break of day, M. de Renal received an anonymous letter. It was couched in the most insulting style. The coarsest words applicable to his position stared from every line. It was the work of some envious subordinate. This letter brought him back to the thought of fighting a duel with M. Valenod. Soon his courage had risen to the idea of an immediate execution of his design. He left the house unaccompanied, and went to the gunsmith’s to procure a brace of pistols, which he told the man to load.

‘After all,’ he said to himself, ‘should the drastic rule of the Emperor Napoleon be restored, I myself could not be charged with the misappropriation of a halfpenny. At the most I have shut my eyes; but I have plenty of letters in my desk authorising me to do so.’

Madame de Renal was frightened by her husband’s cold anger, it brought back to her mind the fatal thought of widowhood, which she found it so hard to banish. She shut herself up with him. For hours on end she pleaded with him in vain, the latest anonymous letter had determined him. At length she succeeded in transforming the courage required to strike M. Valenod into that required to offer Julien six hundred francs for his maintenance for one year in a Seminary. M. de Renal, heaping a thousand curses on the day on which he had conceived the fatal idea of taking a tutor into his household, forgot the anonymous letter.

He found a grain of comfort in an idea which he did not communicate to his wife: by skilful handling, and by taking advantage of the young man’s romantic ideas, he hoped to bind him, for a smaller sum, to refuse M. Valenod’s offers.

Madame de Renal found it far harder to prove to Julien that, if he sacrificed to her husband’s convenience a post worth eight hundred francs, publicly offered him by the Governor of the Poorhouse, he might without blushing accept some compensation.

‘But,’ Julien continued to object, ‘I have never had, even for a moment, the slightest thought of accepting that offer. You have made me too familiar with a life of refinement, the vulgarity of those people would kill me.’

Cruel necessity, with its hand of iron, bent Julien’s will. His pride offered him the self-deception of accepting only as a loan the sum offered by the Mayor of Verrieres, and giving him a note of hand promising repayment with interest after five years.

Madame de Renal had still some thousands of francs hidden in the little cave in the mountains.

She offered him these, trembling, and feeling only too sure that they would be rejected with fury.

‘Do you wish,’ Julien asked her, ‘to make the memory of our love abominable?’

At length Julien left Verrieres. M. de Renal was overjoyed; at the decisive moment of accepting money from him, this sacrifice proved to be too great for Julien. He refused point-blank. M. de Renal fell upon his neck, with tears in his eyes. Julien having asked him for a testimonial to his character, he could not in his enthusiasm find terms laudatory enough to extol the young man’s conduct. Our hero had saved up five louis and intended to ask Fouque for a similar amount.

He was greatly moved. But when he had gone a league from Verrieres, where he was leaving such a treasure of love behind him, he thought only of the pleasure of seeing a capital, a great military centre like Besancon.

During this short parting of three days, Madame de Renal was duped by one of love’s most cruel illusions. Her life was tolerable enough, there was between her and the last extremes of misery this final meeting that she was still to have with Julien.

She counted the hours, the minutes that divided her from it. Finally, during the night that followed the third day, she heard in the distance the signal arranged between them. Having surmounted a thousand perils, Julien appeared before her.

>From that moment, she had but a single thought: ‘I am looking at you now for the last time.’ Far from responding to her lover’s eagerness, she was like a barely animated corpse. If she forced herself to tell him that she loved him, it was with an awkward air that was almost a proof to the contrary. Nothing could take her mind from the cruel thought of eternal separation. The suspicious Julien fancied for a moment that she had already forgotten him. His hints at such a possibility were received only with huge tears that flowed in silence, and with a convulsive pressure of his hand.

‘But, Great God! How do you expect me to believe you?’ was Julien’s reply to his mistress’s chill protestations. ‘You would show a hundred times more of sincere affection to Madame Derville, to a mere acquaintance.’

Madame de Renal, petrified, did not know how to answer.

‘It would be impossible for a woman to be more wretched . . . I hope I am going to die . . . I feel my heart freezing . . .’

Such were the longest answers he was able to extract from her.

When the approach of day made his departure necessary, Madame de Renal’s tears ceased all at once. She saw him fasten a knotted cord to the window without saying a word, without returning his kisses. In vain might Julien say to her:

‘At last we have reached the state for which you so longed. Henceforward you will live without remorse. At the slightest indisposition of one of your children, you will no longer see them already in the grave.’

‘I am sorry you could not say good-bye to Stanislas,’ she said to him coldly.

In the end, Julien was deeply impressed by the embraces, in which there was no warmth, of this living corpse; he could think of nothing else for some leagues. His spirit was crushed, and before crossing the pass, so long as he was able to see the steeple of Verrieres church, he turned round often.

Chapter 24

A Capital

So much noise, so many busy people! So many ideas in the head of a man of twenty! So many distractions for love!

BARNAVE

At length he made out, on a distant mountain, a line of dark walls; it was the citadel of Besancon. ‘How different for me,’ he said with a sigh, ‘if I were arriving in this noble fortress to be a sublieutenant in one of the regiments entrusted with its defence!’

Besancon is not merely one of the most charming towns in France, it abounds in men and women of feeling and spirit. But Julien was only a young peasant and had no way of approaching the distinguished people.

He had borrowed from Fouque a layman’s coat, and it was in this attire that he crossed the drawbridges. His mind full of the history of the siege of 1674, he was determined to visit, before shutting himself up in the Seminary, the ramparts and the citadel. More than once, he was on the point of being arrested by the sentries for making his way into places from which the engineers of the garrison excluded the public, in order to make a profit of twelve or fifteen francs every year by the sale of the hay grown there.

The height of the walls, the depth of the moats, the awe-inspiring appearance of the guns had occupied him for some hours, when he happened to pass by the principal cafe, on the boulevard. He stood speechless with admiration; albeit he could read the word Cafe inscribed in huge letters over the two vast doors, he could not believe his eyes. He made an effort to master his

timidity; he ventured to enter, and found himself in a hall thirty or forty feet long, the ceiling of which rose to a height of at least twenty feet. On this day of days everything wore an air of enchantment for him.

Two games of billiards were in progress. The waiters were calling out the scores; the players hurried round the tables through a crowd of onlookers. Streams of tobacco smoke, pouring from every mouth, enveloped them in a blue haze. The tall stature of these men, their rounded shoulders, their heavy gait, their bushy whiskers, the long frock coats that coveted their bodies, all attracted Julien's attention. These noble sons of ancient Bisontium conversed only in shouts; they gave themselves the air of tremendous warriors. Julien stood spellbound in admiration; he was thinking of the vastness and splendour of a great capital like Besancon. He felt that he could not possibly summon up courage to ask for a cup of coffee from one of those gentlemen with the proud gaze who were marking the score at billiards.

But the young lady behind the counter had remarked the charming appearance of this young country cousin, who, brought to a standstill three paces from the stove, hugging his little bundle under his arm, was studying the bust of the King, in gleaming white plaster. This young lady, a strapping Franc–Comtoise, extremely well made, and dressed in the style calculated to give tone to a cafe, had already said twice, in a low voice so modulated that only Julien should hear her: 'Sir! Sir!' Julien's gaze met that of a pair of the most tender blue eyes, and saw that it was himself who was being addressed.

He stepped briskly up to the counter and the pretty girl, as he might have advanced in the face of the enemy. As he executed this great movement, his bundle fell to the ground.

What pity will not our provincial inspire in the young scholars of Paris, who at fifteen, have already learned how to enter a cafe with so distinguished an air! But these children, so stylish at fifteen, at eighteen begin to turn common. The passionate shyness which one meets in the provinces now and then overcomes itself, and then teaches its victim to desire. As he approached this beautiful girl who had deigned to speak to him, 'I must tell her the truth,' thought Julien, who was growing courageous by dint of his conquered shyness.

‘Madame, I have come for the first time in my life to Besancon; I should like to have, and to pay for, a roll of bread and a cup of coffee.’

The girl smiled a little and then blushed; she feared, for this good-looking young man, the satirical attention and witticisms of the billiard players. He would be frightened and would never show his face there again.

‘Sit down here, near me,’ she said, and pointed to a marble table, almost entirely hidden by the enormous mahogany counter which protruded into the room.

The young woman leaned over this counter, which gave her an opportunity to display a superb figure. Julien observed this; all his ideas altered. The pretty girl had just set before him a cup, some sugar and a roll of bread. She hesitated before calling to a waiter for coffee, realising that on the arrival of the said waiter her private conversation with Julien would be at an end.

Julien, lost in thought, was comparing this fair and sprightly beauty with certain memories which often stirred him. The thought of the passion of which he had been the object took from him almost all his timidity. The pretty girl had only a moment; she read the expression in Julien’s eyes.

‘This pipe smoke makes you cough, come to breakfast tomorrow before eight o’clock; at that time, I am almost alone.’

‘What is your name?’ said Julien, with the caressing smile of happy timidity.

‘Amanda Binet.’

‘Will you permit me to send you, in an hour’s time, a little parcel no bigger than this?’

The fair Amanda reflected for a while.

‘I am watched: what you ask may compromise me; however, I am now going to write down my address upon a card, which you can attach to your parcel. Send it to me without fear.’

‘My name is Julien Sorel,’ said the young man. ‘I have neither family nor friends in Besancon.’

‘Ah! Now I understand,’ she exclaimed joyfully, ‘you have come for the law school?’

‘Alas, no!’ replied Julien; ‘they are sending me to the Seminary.’

The most complete discouragement extinguished the light in Amanda’s features; she called a waiter: she had the necessary courage now. The waiter poured out Julien’s coffee, without looking at him.

Amanda was taking money at the counter; Julien prided himself on having ventured to speak to her: there was a dispute in progress at one of the billiard tables. The shouts and contradictions of the players, echoing through that vast hall, made a din which astonished Julien. Amanda was pensive and did not raise her eyes.

‘If you like, Mademoiselle,’ he said to her suddenly with assurance, ‘I can say that I am your cousin.’

This little air of authority delighted Amanda. This is no good-for-nothing young fellow,’ she thought. She said to him very quickly, without looking at him, for her eye was occupied in watching whether anyone were approaching the counter:

‘I come from Genlis, near Dijon; say that you are from Genlis too, and my mother’s cousin.’

‘I shall not forget.’

‘On Thursdays, at five o’clock, in summer, the young gentlemen from the Seminary come past the cafe here.’

‘If you are thinking of me, when I pass, have a bunch of violets in your hand.’

Amanda gazed at him with an air of astonishment; this gaze changed Julien’s courage into temerity; he blushed deeply, however, as he said to her:

‘I feel that I love you with the most violent love.’

‘Don’t speak so loud, then,’ she warned him with an air of alarm.

Julien thought of trying to recollect the language of an odd volume of the Nouvelle Heloise, which he had found at Vergy. His memory served him well; he had been for ten minutes reciting the Nouvelle Heloise to Miss Amanda, who was in ecstasies; he was delighted with his own courage, when suddenly the fair Franc–Comtoise assumed a glacial air. One of her admirers stood in the doorway of the cafe.

He came up to the counter, whistling and swaying his shoulders; he stared at Julien. For the moment, the latter’s imagination, always flying to extremes, was filled entirely with thoughts of a duel. He turned deadly pale, thrust away his cup, assumed an air of assurance and studied his rival most attentively. While this rival’s head was lowered as he familiarly poured himself out a glass of brandy upon the counter, with a glance Amanda ordered Julien to lower his gaze. He obeyed, and for a minute or two sat motionless in his place, pale, determined, and thinking only of what was going to happen; he was really fine at that moment. The rival had been astonished by Julien’s eyes; his glass of brandy drained at a gulp, he said a few words to Amanda, thrust his hands into the side pockets of his ample coat, and made his way to one of the billiard tables, breathing loudly and staring at Julien. The latter sprang to his feet in a transport of rage; but did not know what action to take to be insulting. He laid down his little bundle and, with the most swaggering gait that he could assume, strode towards the billiard table.

In vain did prudence warn him: ‘With a duel on the day of your arrival at Besancon, your career in the church is gone for ever.’

‘What does that matter, it shall never be said that I quailed before an insult.’

Amanda observed his courage; it formed a charming contrast with the simplicity of his manners; in an instant, she preferred him to the big young man in the long coat. She rose, and, while appearing to be following with her eyes the movements of someone going by in the street, took her place swiftly between him and the billiard table.

‘You are not to look askance at that gentleman; he is my brother-inlaw.’

‘What do I care? He looked at me.’

‘Do you wish to get me into trouble? No doubt, he looked at you, perhaps he will even come up and speak to you. I have told him that you are one of my mother’s family and that you have just come from Genlis. He is a Franc–Comtois and has never been farther than Dole, on the road into Burgundy; so tell him whatever you like, don’t be afraid.’

Julien continued to hesitate; she added rapidly, her barmaid’s imagination supplying her with falsehoods in abundance:

‘I dare say he did look at you, but it was when he was asking me who you were; he is a man who is rude with everyone, he didn’t mean to insult you.’

Julien’s eye followed the alleged brother-inlaw; he saw him buy a number for the game of pool which was beginning at the farther of the two billiard tables. Julien heard his loud voice exclaim: ‘I volunteer!’ He passed nimbly behind Miss Amanda’s back and took a step towards the billiard table. Amanda seized him by the arm.

‘Come and pay me first,’ she said to him.

‘Quite right,’ thought Julien; ‘she is afraid I may leave without paying.’ Amanda was as greatly agitated as himself, and had turned very red; she counted out his change as slowly as she could, repeating to him in a whisper as she did so:

‘Leave the cafe this instant, or I shan’t like you any more; I do like you, though, very much.’

Julien did indeed leave, but slowly. ‘Is it not incumbent upon me,’ he repeated to himself, ‘to go and stare at that rude person in my turn, and breathe in his face?’ This uncertainty detained him for an hour on the boulevard, outside the cafe; he watched to see if his man came out. He did not however appear, and Julien withdrew.

He had been but a few hours in Besancon, and already he had something to regret. The old Surgeon–Major had long ago, notwithstanding his gout, taught him a few lessons in fencing; this was all the science that Julien could place at the service of his anger. But this embarrassment would have been nothing if he had known how to pick a quarrel otherwise than by striking a blow; and, if they had come to fisticuffs, his rival, a giant of a man, would have beaten him and left him discomfited.

'For a poor devil like me,' thought Julien, 'without protectors and without money, there will be no great difference between a Seminary and a prison; I must leave my lay clothes in some inn, where I can put on my black coat. If I ever succeed in escaping from the Seminary for an hour or two, I can easily, in my lay clothes, see Miss Amanda again.' This was sound reasoning; but Julien, as he passed by all the inns in turn, had not the courage to enter any of them.

Finally, as he came again to the Hotel des Ambassadeurs, his roving gaze met that of a stout woman, still reasonably young, with a high complexion, a happy and gay expression. He went up to her and told her his story.

'Certainly, my fine young priest,' the landlady of the Ambassadeurs said to him, 'I shall keep your lay clothes for you, indeed I will have them brushed regularly. In this weather, it is a mistake to leave a broadcloth coat lying.' She took a key and led him herself to a bedroom, advising him to write down a list of what he was leaving behind.

'Lord, how nice you look like that, M. l'abbe Sorel,' said the stout woman, when he came down to the kitchen. 'I am going to order you a good dinner; and,' she added in an undertone, 'it will only cost you twenty sous, instead of the fifty people generally pay; for you must be careful with your little purse.'

'I have ten louis,' retorted Julien with a certain note of pride.

'Oh, good Lord!' replied the good landlady in alarm, 'do not speak so loud; there are plenty of bad folk in Besancon. They will have that out of you in less than no time. Whatever you do, never go into the cafes, they are full of rogues.'

‘Indeed!’ said Julien, to whom this last statement gave food for thought.

‘Never go anywhere except to me, I will give you your coffee. Bear in mind that you will always find a friend here and a good dinner for twenty sous; that’s good enough for you, I hope. Go and sit down at the table, I am going to serve you myself.’

‘I should not be able to eat,’ Julien told her. ‘I am too much excited, I am going to enter the Seminary as soon as I leave here.’

The good woman would not allow him to leave until she had stuffed his pockets with provisions. Finally Julien set out for the dread spot, the landlady from her doorstep pointing out the way.

Chapter 25

The Seminary

Three hundred and thirty-six dinners at 83 centimes, three hundred and thirty-six suppers at 38 centimes, chocolate to such as are entitled to it; how much is there to be made on the contract?

THE VALENOD OF BESANCON

He saw from a distance the cross of gilded iron over the door; he went towards it slowly; his legs seemed to be giving way under him. ‘So there is that hell upon earth, from which I can never escape!’ Finally he decided to ring. The sound of the bell echoed as though in a deserted place. After ten minutes, a pale man dressed in black came and opened the door to him. Julien looked at him and at once lowered his gaze. This porter had a singular physiognomy. The prominent green pupils of his eyes were convex as those of a cat’s; the unwinking contours of his eyelids proclaimed the impossibility of any human feeling; his thin lips were stretched and curved over his protruding teeth. And yet this physiognomy did not suggest a criminal nature, so much as that entire insensibility which inspires far greater terror in the young. The sole feeling that Julien’s rapid glance could discern in that long, smug face was a profound contempt for every subject that might be mentioned to him, which did not refer to another and a better world.

Julien raised his eyes with an effort, and in a voice which the palpitation of his heart made tremulous explained that he wished to speak to M. Pirard, the Director of the Seminary. Without a word, the man in black made a sign to him to follow. They climbed two flights of a wide staircase with a wooden baluster, the warped steps of which sloped at a downward angle from the wall, and seemed on the point of collapse. A small door, surmounted by a

large graveyard cross of white wood painted black, yielded to pressure and the porter showed him into a low and gloomy room, the whitewashed walls of which were adorned with two large pictures dark with age. There, Julien was left to himself; he was terrified, his heart throbbed violently; he would have liked to find the courage to weep. A deathly silence reigned throughout the building.

After a quarter of an hour, which seemed to him a day, the sinister porter reappeared on the threshold of a door at the other end of the room, and, without condescending to utter a word, beckoned to him to advance. He entered a room even larger than the first and very badly lighted. The walls of this room were whitewashed also; but they were bare of ornament. Only in a corner by the door, Julien noticed in passing a bed of white wood, two straw chairs and a little armchair made of planks of firwood without a cushion. At the other end of the room, near a small window with dingy panes, decked with neglected flowerpots, he saw a man seated at a table and dressed in a shabby cassock; he appeared to be in a rage, and was taking one after another from a pile of little sheets of paper which he spread out on his table after writing a few words on each. He did not observe Julien's presence. The latter remained motionless, standing in the middle of the room, where he had been left by the porter, who had gone out again shutting the door behind him.

Ten minutes passed in this fashion; the shabbily dressed man writing all the time. Julien's emotion and terror were such that he felt himself to be on the point of collapsing. A philosopher would have said, perhaps wrongly: 'It is the violent impression made by ugliness on a soul created to love what is beautiful.'

The man who was writing raised his head; Julien did not observe this for a moment, and indeed, after he had noticed it, still remained motionless, as though turned to stone by the terrible gaze that was fixed on him. Julien's swimming eyes could barely make out a long face covered all over with red spots, except on the forehead, which displayed a deathly pallor. Between the red cheeks and white forehead shone a pair of little black eyes calculated to inspire terror in the bravest heart. The vast expanse of his forehead was outlined by a mass of straight hair, as black as jet.

‘Are you coming nearer, or not?’ the man said at length impatiently.

Julien advanced with an uncertain step, and at length, ready to fall to the ground and paler than he had ever been in his life, came to a halt a few feet away from the little table of white wood covered with scraps of paper.

‘Nearer,’ said the man.

Julien advanced farther, stretching out his hand as though in search of something to lean upon.

‘Your name?’

‘Julien Sorel.’

‘You are very late,’ said the other, once more fastening upon him a terrible eye.

Julien could not endure this gaze; putting out his hand as though to support himself, he fell full length upon the floor.

The man rang a bell. Julien had lost only his sense of vision and the strength to move; he could hear footsteps approaching.

He was picked up and placed in the little armchair of white wood. He heard the terrible man say to the porter:

‘An epileptic, evidently; I might have known it.’

When Julien was able to open his eyes, the man with the red face was again writing; the porter had vanished. ‘I must have courage,’ our hero told himself, ‘and above all hide my feelings.’ He felt a sharp pain at his heart. ‘If I am taken ill, heaven knows what they will think of me.’ At length the man stopped writing, and with a sidelong glance at Julien asked:

‘Are you in a fit state to answer my questions?’

‘Yes, Sir,’ said Julien in a feeble voice.

‘Ah! That is fortunate.’

The man in black had half risen and was impatiently seeking for a letter in the drawer of his table of firwood which opened with a creak. He found it, slowly resumed his seat, and once more gazing at Julien, with an air which seemed to wrest from him the little life that remained to him:

‘You are recommended to me by M. Chelan, who was the best cure in the diocese, a good man if ever there was one, and my friend for the last thirty years.’

‘Ah! It is M. Pirard that I have the honour to address,’ said Julien in a feeble voice.

‘So it seems,’ said the Director of the Seminary, looking sourly at him.

The gleam in his little eyes brightened, followed by an involuntary jerk of the muscles round his mouth. It was the physiognomy of a tiger relishing in anticipation the pleasure of devouring its prey.

‘Chelan’s letter is short,’ he said, as though speaking to himself. ‘Intelligenti pauca; in these days, one cannot write too little.’ He read aloud:

‘“I send you Julien Sorel, of this parish, whom I baptised nearly twenty years ago; his father is a wealthy carpenter but allows him nothing. Julien will be a noteworthy labourer in the Lord’s vineyard. Memory, intelligence are not wanting, he has the power of reflection. Will his vocation last? Is it sincere?”’

‘Sincere!’ repeated the abbe Pirard with an air of surprise, gazing at Julien; but this time the abbe’s gaze was less devoid of all trace of humanity. ‘Sincere!’ he repeated, lowering his voice and returning to the letter:

‘“I ask you for a bursary for Julien; he will qualify for it by undergoing the necessary examinations. I have taught him a little divinity, that old and sound divinity of Bossuet, Arnault, Fleury. If the young man is not to your liking, send him back to me; the Governor of our Poorhouse, whom you know well, offers him eight hundred francs to come as tutor to his children.

Inwardly I am calm, thank God. I am growing accustomed to the terrible blow. Vale et me ama.”’

The abbe Pirard, relaxing the speed of his utterance as he came to the signature, breathed with a sigh the word ‘Chelan.’

‘He is calm,’ he said; ‘indeed, his virtue deserved that reward; God grant it to me, when my time comes!’

He looked upwards and made the sign of the Cross. At the sight of this holy symbol Julien felt a slackening of the profound horror which, from his entering the building, had frozen him.

‘I have here three hundred and twenty-one aspirants for the holiest of callings,’ the abbe Pirard said at length, in a severe but not hostile tone; ‘only seven or eight have been recommended to me by men like the abbe Chelan; thus among the three hundred and twenty-one you will be the ninth. But my protection is neither favour nor weakness, it is an increase of precaution and severity against vice. Go and lock that door.’

Julien made an effort to walk and managed not to fall. He noticed that a little window, near the door by which he had entered, commanded a view of the country. He looked at the trees; the sight of them did him good, as though he had caught sight of old friends.

‘Loquerisne linguam latinam? (Do you speak Latin?)’ the abbe Pirard asked him as he returned.

‘Ita, pater optime (Yes, excellent Father),’ replied Julien, who was beginning to come to himself. Certainly nobody in the world had appeared to him less excellent than M. Pirard, during the last half-hour.

The conversation continued in Latin. The expression in the abbe’s eyes grew gentler; Julien recovered a certain coolness. ‘How weak I am,’ he thought, ‘to let myself be imposed upon by this show of virtue! This man will be simply a rascal like M. Maslon’; and Julien congratulated himself on having hidden almost all his money in his boots.

The abbe Pirard examined Julien in theology, and was surprised by the extent of his knowledge. His astonishment increased when he questioned him more particularly on the Holy Scriptures. But when he came to questions touching the doctrine of the Fathers, he discovered that Julien barely knew the names of Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Basil, etc., etc.

'In fact,' thought the abbe Pirard, 'here is another instance of that fatal tendency towards Protestantism which I have always had to rebuke in Chelan. A thorough, a too thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures.'

(Julien had just spoken to him, without having been questioned on the subject, of the true date of authorship of Genesis, the Pentateuch, etc.)

'To what does all this endless discussion of the Holy Scriptures lead,' thought the abbe Pirard, 'if not to private judgment, that is to say to the most fearful Protestantism? And, in conjunction with this rash learning, nothing about the Fathers that can compensate for this tendency.'

But the astonishment of the Director of the Seminary knew no bounds when, questioning Julien as to the authority of the Pope, and expecting the maxims of the ancient Gallican church, he heard the young man repeat the whole of M. de Maistre's book.

'A strange man, Chelan,' thought the abbe Pirard; 'has he given him this book to teach him to laugh at it?'

In vain did he question Julien, trying to discover whether he seriously believed the doctrine of M. de Maistre. The young man could answer him only by rote. From this moment, Julien was really admirable, he felt that he was master of himself. After a prolonged examination it seemed to him that M. Pirard's severity towards him was no more than an affectation. Indeed, but for the rule of austere gravity which, for the last fifteen years, he had imposed on himself in dealing with his pupils in theology, the Director of the Seminary would have embraced Julien in the name of logic, such clarity, precision, and point did he find in the young man's answers.

‘This is a bold and healthy mind,’ he said to himself, ‘but corpus debile (a frail body).

‘Do you often fall like that?’ he asked Julien in French, pointing with his finger to the floor.

‘It was the first time in my life; the sight of the porter’s face paralysed me,’ Julien explained, colouring like a child.

The abbe Pirard almost smiled.

‘Such is the effect of the vain pomps of this world; you are evidently accustomed to smiling faces, positive theatres of falsehood. The truth is austere, Sir. But is not our task here below austere also? You will have to see that your conscience is on its guard against this weakness: Undue sensibility to vain outward charms.

‘Had you not been recommended to me,’ said the abbe Pirard, returning with marked pleasure to the Latin tongue, ‘had you not been recommended to me by a man such as the abbe Chelan, I should address you in the vain language of this world to which it appears that you are too well accustomed. The entire bursary for which you apply is, I may tell you, the hardest thing in the world to obtain. But the abbe Chelan has earned little, by fifty-six years of apostolic labours, if he cannot dispose of a bursary at the Seminary.’

After saying these words, the abbe Pirard advised Julien not to join any secret society or congregation without his consent.

‘I give you my word of honour,’ said Julien with the heartfelt warmth of an honest man.

The Director of the Seminary smiled for the first time.

‘That expression is not in keeping here,’ he told him; ‘it is too suggestive of the vain honour of men of the world, which leads them into so many errors and often into crime. You owe me obedience in virtue of the seventeenth paragraph of the Bull Unam Ecclesiam of Saint Pius V. I am your ecclesiastical superior. In this house to hear, my dearly beloved son, is to obey. How much money have you?’

(‘Now we come to the point,’ thought Julien, ‘this is the reason of the “dearly beloved son”.’)

‘Thirty-five francs, Father.’

‘Keep a careful note of how you spend your money; you will have to account for it to me.’

This exhausting interview had lasted three hours. Julien was told to summon the porter.

‘Put Julien Sorel in cell number 103,’ the abbe Pirard told the man.

As a special favour, he was giving Julien a room to himself.

‘Take up his trunk,’ he added.

Julien lowered his eyes and saw his trunk staring him in the face; he had been looking at it for three hours and had never seen it.

On arriving at No. 103, which was a tiny room eight feet square on the highest floor of the building, Julien observed that it looked out towards the ramparts, beyond which one saw the smiling plain which the Doubs divides from the city.

‘What a charming view!’ exclaimed Julien; in speaking thus to himself he was not conscious of the feeling implied by his words. The violent sensations he had experienced in the short time that he had spent in Besancon had completely drained his strength. He sat down by the window on the solitary wooden chair that was in his cell, and at once fell into a profound slumber. He did not hear the supper bell, nor that for Benediction; he had been forgotten.

When the first rays of the sun awakened him next morning, he found himself lying upon the floor.

Chapter 26

The World, or What the Rich Lack

I am alone on earth, no one deigns to think of me. All the people I see making their fortunes have a brazenness and a hard-heartedness which I do not sense in myself. Ah! I shall soon be dead, either of hunger, or from the sorrow of finding men so hard.

YOUNG

He made haste to brush his coat and to go downstairs; he was late. An under-master rebuked him severely; instead of seeking to excuse himself, Julien crossed his arms on his breast:

‘Peccavi, pater optime (I have sinned, I confess my fault, O Father),’ he said with a contrite air.

This was a most successful beginning. The sharp wits among the seminarists saw that they had to deal with a man who was not new to the game. The recreation hour came, Julien saw himself the object of general curiosity. But they found in him merely reserve and silence. Following the maxims that he had laid down for himself, he regarded his three hundred and twenty-one comrades as so many enemies; the most dangerous of all in his eyes was the abbe Pirard.

A few days later, Julien had to choose a confessor, he was furnished with a list.

‘Eh; Great God, for what do they take me?’ he said to himself. ‘Do they suppose I can’t take a hint?’ And he chose the abbe Pirard.

Though he did not suspect it, this step was decisive. A little seminarist, still quite a boy, and a native of Verrieres, who, from the first day, had declared himself his friend, informed him that if he had chosen M. Castanede, the vice-principal of the Seminary, he would perhaps have shown greater prudence.

‘The abbe Castanede is the enemy of M. Pirard, who is suspected of Jansenism’; the little seminarist added, whispering this information in his ear.

All the first steps taken by our hero who fancied himself so prudent were, like his choice of a confessor, foolish in the extreme. Led astray by all the presumption of an imaginative man, he mistook his intentions for facts, and thought himself a consummate hypocrite. His folly went the length of his reproaching himself for his successes in this art of the weak.

‘Alas! It is my sole weapon! In another epoch, it would have been by speaking actions in the face of the enemy that I should have earned my bread.’

Julien, satisfied with his own conduct, looked around him; he found everywhere an appearance of the purest virtue.

Nine or ten of the seminarists lived in the odour of sanctity, and had visions like Saint Teresa and Saint Francis, when he received the Stigmata upon Monte Verna, in the Apennines. But this was a great secret which their friends kept to themselves. These poor young visionaries were almost always in the infirmary. Some hundred others combined with a robust faith an unwearying application. They worked until they made themselves ill, but without learning much. Two or three distinguished themselves by real talent, and, among these, one named Chazel; but Julien felt himself repelled by them, and they by him.

The rest of the three hundred and twenty-one seminarists were composed entirely of coarse creatures who were by no means certain that they understood the Latin words which they repeated all day long. Almost all of them were the sons of peasants, and preferred to earn their bread by reciting a few Latin words rather than by tilling the soil. It was after making this

discovery, in the first few days, that Julien promised himself a rapid success. ‘In every service, there is need of intelligent people, for after all there is work to be done,’ he told himself. ‘Under Napoleon, I should have been a serjeant; among these future cures, I shall be a Vicar–General.

‘All these poor devils,’ he added, ‘labourers from the cradle, have lived, until they came here, upon skim milk and black bread. In their cottages, they tasted meat only five or six times in a year. Like the Roman soldiers who found active service a holiday, these boorish peasants are enchanted by the luxuries of the Seminary.’

Julien never read anything in their lack-lustre eyes beyond the satisfaction of a bodily need after dinner, and the expectation of a bodily pleasure before the meal. Such were the people among whom he must distinguish himself; but what Julien did not know, what they refrained from telling him, was that to be at the top of the various classes of dogma, church history, etc., etc., which were studied in the Seminary, was nothing more in their eyes than a sin of vainglory. Since Voltaire, since Two Chamber government, which is at bottom only distrust and private judgment, and instils in the hearts of the people that fatal habit of want of confidence, the Church of France seems to have realised that books are its true enemies. It is heartfelt submission that is everything in its eyes. Success in studies, even in sacred studies, is suspect, and with good reason. What is to prevent the superior man from going over to the other side, like Sieyes or Gregoire? The trembling Church clings to the Pope as to her sole chance of salvation. The Pope alone can attempt to paralyse private judgment, and, by the pious pomps of the ceremonies of his court, make an impression upon the sick and listless minds of men and women of the world.

Having half mastered these several truths, which however all the words uttered in a Seminary tend to deny, Julien fell into a deep melancholy. He worked hard, and rapidly succeeded in learning things of great value to a priest, entirely false in his eyes, and in which he took no interest. He imagined that there was nothing else for him to do.

‘Am I then forgotten by all the world?’ he wondered. He little knew that M. Pirard had received and had flung in the fire several letters bearing the Dijon postmark, letters in which, despite the most conventional style and language,

the most intense passion was apparent. Keen remorse seemed to be doing battle with this love. ‘So much the better,’ thought the abbe Pirard, ‘at least it is not an irreligious woman that this young man has loved.’

One day, the abbe Pirard opened a letter which seemed to be half obliterated by tears, it was an eternal farewell. ‘At last,’ the writer informed Julien, ‘heaven has granted me the grace of hating not the author of my fault, he will always be dearer to me than anything in the world, but my fault itself. The sacrifice is made, my friend. It is not without tears, as you see. The salvation of the beings to whom I am bound, and whom you have loved so dearly, has prevailed. A just but terrible God can no longer wreak vengeance upon them for their mother’s crimes. Farewell, Julien, be just towards men.’

This ending to the letter was almost entirely illegible. The writer gave an address at Dijon, and at the same time hoped that Julien would never reply, or that at least he would confine himself to language which a woman restored to the ways of virtue could read without blushing.

Julien’s melancholy, assisted by the indifferent food supplied to the Seminary by the contractor for dinners at 83 centimes a head, was beginning to have an effect on his health, when one morning Fouque suddenly appeared in his room.

‘At last I have found my way in. I have come five times to Besancon, honour bound, to see you. Always a barred door. I posted someone at the gate of the Seminary; why the devil do you never come out?’

‘It is a test which I have set myself.’

‘I find you greatly altered. At last I see you again. Two good five franc pieces have just taught me that I was no better than a fool not to have offered them on my first visit.’

The conversation between the friends was endless. Julien changed colour when Fouque said to him:

‘Have you heard, by the way? The mother of your pupils has become most devoutly religious.’

And he spoke with that detached air which makes so singular an impression on the passionate soul whose dearest interests the speaker unconsciously destroys.

‘Yes, my friend, the most exalted strain of piety. They say that she makes pilgrimages. But, to the eternal shame of the abbe Maslon, who has been spying so long upon that poor M. Chelan, Madame de Renal will have nothing to do with him. She goes to confession at Dijon or Besancon.’

‘She comes to Besancon!’ said Julien, his brow flushing.

‘Quite often,’ replied Fouque with a questioning air.

‘Have you any Constitutionnels on you?’

‘What’s that you say?’ replied Fouque.

‘I ask you if you have any Constitutionnels?’ Julien repeated, in a calmer tone. ‘They are sold here for thirty sous a copy.’

‘What! Liberals even in the Seminary!’ cried Fouque. ‘Unhappy France!’ he went on, copying the hypocritical tone and meek accents of the abbe Maslon.

This visit would have made a profound impression upon our hero, had not, the very next day, a remark addressed to him by that little seminarist from Verrieres who seemed such a boy, led him to make an important discovery. Ever since he had been in the Seminary, Julien’s conduct had been nothing but a succession of false steps. He laughed bitterly at himself.

As a matter of fact, the important actions of his life were wisely ordered; but he paid no attention to details, and the clever people in a Seminary look only at details. And so he passed already among his fellow students as a free thinker. He had been betrayed by any number of trifling actions.

In their eyes he was convicted of this appalling vice, he thought, he judged for himself, instead of blindly following authority and example. The abbe Pirard had been of no assistance to him; he had not once uttered a word to him apart from the tribunal of penitence, and even there he listened rather

than spoke. It would have been very different had Julien chosen the abbe Castanede.

The moment that Julien became aware of his own folly, his interest revived. He wished to know the whole extent of the harm, and, with this object, emerged a little from that haughty and obstinate silence with which he repulsed his fellows. It was then that they took their revenge on him. His advances were received with a contempt which went the length of derision. He realised that since his entering the Seminary, not an hour had passed, especially during recreation, that had not borne some consequence for or against him, had not increased the number of his enemies, or won him the good will of some seminarist who was genuinely virtuous or a trifle less boorish than the rest. The damage to be repaired was immense, the task one of great difficulty. Thenceforward Julien's attention was constantly on the alert; it was a case of portraying himself in an entirely new character.

The control of his eyes, for instance, gave him a great deal of trouble. It is not without reason that in such places they are kept lowered. 'What was not my presumption at Verrieres!' Julien said to himself, 'I imagined I was alive; I was only preparing myself for life; here I am at last in the world, as I shall find it until I have played out my part, surrounded by real enemies. What an immense difficulty,' he went on, 'is this incessant hypocrisy! It would put the labours of Hercules to shame. The Hercules of modern times is Sixtus V, who for fifteen years on end, by his modesty, deceived forty Cardinals, who had seen him proud and vigorous in his youth.

'So learning is really nothing here!' he told himself with scorn; 'progress in dogma, in sacred history, and the rest of it, count only in appearance. All that is said on that topic is intended to make fools like myself fall into the trap. Alas, my sole merit consisted in my rapid progress, in my faculty for grasping all that nonsense. Can it be that in their hearts they esteem it at its true value; judge of it as I do? And I was fool enough to be proud of myself! Those first places in class which I always obtain have served only to give me bitter enemies. Chazel, who knows far more than I, always puts into his compositions some piece of stupidity which sends him down to the fiftieth place; if he obtains the first, it is when he is not thinking. Ah! one word, a single word from M. Pirard, how useful it would have been to me!'

>From the moment in which Julien's eyes were opened, the long exercises of ascetic piety, such as the Rosary five times weekly, the hymns to the Sacred Heart, etc., etc., which had seemed to him of such deadly dullness, became the most interesting actions of his life. Sternly criticising his own conduct, and seeking above all not to exaggerate his methods, Julien did not aspire from the first, like the seminarists who served as models to the rest, to perform at every moment some significant action, that is to say one which gave proof of some form of Christian perfection. In Seminaries, there is a way of eating a boiled egg which reveals the progress one has made in the godly life.

The reader, who is perhaps smiling, will please to remember all the mistakes made, in eating an egg, by the abbe Delille when invited to luncheon by a great lady of the Court of Louis XVI.

Julien sought at first to arrive at the non culpa, to wit, the state of the young seminarist whose gait, his way of moving his arms, eyes, etc., do not, it is true, indicate anything worldly, but do not yet show the creature absorbed by the idea of the next life and the absolute nullity of this.

Everywhere Julien found inscribed in charcoal, on the walls of the passages, sentences like the following: 'What are sixty years of trial, set in the balance with an eternity of bliss or an eternity of boiling oil in hell!' He no longer despised them; he realised that he must have them always before his eyes. 'What shall I be doing all my life?' he said to himself; 'I shall be selling the faithful a place in heaven. How is that place to be made visible to them? By the difference between my exterior and that of a layman.'

After several months of application kept up at every moment, Julien still had the air of a thinker. His way of moving his eyes and opening his lips did not reveal an implicit faith ready to believe everything and to uphold everything, even by martyrdom. It was with anger that Julien saw himself surpassed in this respect by the most boorish peasants. They had good reasons for not having the air of thinkers.

What pains did he not take to arrive at that expression of blind and fervent faith, which is so frequently to be found in the convents of Italy, and such

perfect examples of which Guercino has bequeathed to us laymen in his paintings in churches.†

† Author's footnote: For instance, in the Louvre, no. 1130: 'Francis Duke of Aquitaine laying aside the crown and putting on a monastic habit.']

On the greatest festivals the seminarists were given sausages with pickled cabbage. Julien's neighbours at table observed that he remained unmoved by this good fortune; it was one of his first crimes. His comrades saw in it an odious mark of the most stupid hypocrisy; nothing made him so many enemies. 'Look at that gentleman, look at that proud fellow,' they would say, 'pretending to despise our best ration, sausages with cabbage! The wretched conceit of the damned fellow!' He should have refrained as an act of penance from eating the whole of his portion, and should have made the sacrifice of saying to some friend, with reference to the pickled cabbage: 'What is there that man can offer to an All Powerful Being, if it be not voluntary suffering?'

Julien lacked the experience which makes it so easy for us to see things of this sort.

'Alas! The ignorance of these young peasants, my comrades, is a great advantage to them,' Julien would exclaim in moments of discouragement. 'When they arrive in the Seminary, the teacher has not to rid them of the appalling number of worldly thoughts which I brought with me, and which they read on my face, do what I will.'

Julien studied with an attention that bordered upon envy the more boorish of the young peasants who arrived at the Seminary. At the moment when they were stripped of their ratteen jackets to be garbed in the black cassock, their education was limited to an immense and unbounded respect for dry and liquid money, as the saying goes in the Franche–Comte.

It is the sacramental and heroic fashion of expressing the sublime idea of ready cash.

Happiness, for these seminarists, as for the heroes of Voltaire's tales, consists first and foremost in dining well. Julien discovered in almost all of them an innate respect for the man who wears a coat of fine cloth. This sentiment

estimates distributive justice, as it is dealt out to us by our courts, at its true worth, indeed below its true worth. ‘What is to be gained,’ they would often say among themselves, ‘by going to law with the big?’

‘Big’ is the word used in the valleys of the Jura to denote a rich man. One may imagine their respect for the richest party of all: the Government!

Not to smile respectfully at the mere name of the Prefect is reckoned, among the peasants of the Franche–Comte, an imprudence; and imprudence, among the poor, is promptly punished with want of bread.

After having been almost suffocated at first by his sense of scorn, Julien ended by feeling pity: it had often been the lot of the fathers of the majority of his comrades to come home on a winter evening to their cottages, and to find there no bread, no chestnuts, and no potatoes. ‘Is it surprising then,’ Julien asked himself, ‘if the happy man, in their eyes, is first of all the man who has just eaten a good dinner, and after that he who possesses a good coat! My comrades have a definite vocation; that is to say, they see in the ecclesiastical calling a long continuation of this happiness: dining well and having a warm coat in winter.’

Julien happened to hear a young seminarist, endowed with imagination, say to his companion:

‘Why should not I become Pope like Sixtus v, who was a swineherd?’

‘They make none but Italians Popes,’ replied the friend; ‘but they’ll draw lots among us, for sure, to fill places as Vicars–General and Canons, and perhaps Bishops. M. P —— the Bishop of Chalons, is the son of a cooper; that is my father’s trade.’

One day, in the middle of a lesson in dogma, the abbe Pirard sent for Julien. The poor young fellow was delighted to escape from the physical and moral atmosphere in which he was plunged.

Julien found himself greeted by the Director in the manner which had so frightened him on the day of his joining the Seminary.

‘Explain to me what I see written upon this playing card,’ he said to him, looking at him in such a way as to make him wish that the earth would open and swallow him.

Julien read:

‘Amanda Binet, at the Giraffe cafe, before eight o’clock. Say you are from Genlis, and a cousin of my mother.’

Julien perceived the immensity of the danger; the abbe Castanede’s police had stolen the address from him.

‘The day on which I came here,’ he replied, gazing at the abbe Pirard’s forehead, for he could not face his terrible eye, ‘I was trembling with fear: M. Chelan had told me that this was a place full of tale-bearing and spite of all sorts; spying and the accusation of one’s comrades are encouraged here. Such is the will of heaven, to show life as it is to young priests, and to inspire in them a disgust with the world and its pomps.’

‘And it is to me that you make these fine speeches’ — the abbe Pirard was furious. ‘You young rascal!’

‘At Verrieres,’ Julien went on calmly, ‘my brothers used to beat me when they had any reason to be jealous of me . . .’

‘To the point! Get to the point!’ cried M. Pirard, almost beside himself.

Without being the least bit in the world intimidated, Julien resumed his narrative.

‘On the day of my coming to Besancon, about noon, I felt hungry, I went into a cafe. My heart was filled with repugnance for so profane a spot; but I thought that my luncheon would cost me less there than at an inn. A lady, who seemed to be the mistress of the place, took pity on my raw looks. “Besancon is full of wicked people,” she told me, “I am afraid for you, Sir. If you find yourself in any trouble, come to me, send a message to me before eight o’clock. If the porters at the Seminary refuse to take your message, say that you are my cousin, and come from Genlis . . . “‘

‘All this farrago will have to be investigated,’ exclaimed the abbe Pirard who, unable to remain in one place, was striding up and down the room.

‘You will go back to your cell!’

The abbe accompanied Julien and locked him in. He himself at once proceeded to examine his trunk, in the bottom of which the fatal card had been carefully concealed. Nothing was missing from the trunk, but several things had been disarranged; and yet the key never left his possession. ‘How fortunate,’ Julien said to himself, ‘that during the time of my blindness I never made use of the permission to leave the building, which M. Castanede so frequently offered me with a generosity which I now understand. Perhaps I might have been so foolish as to change my clothes and pay the fair Amanda a visit, I should have been ruined. When they despaired of making any use of their information in that way, so as not to waste it they have used it to denounce me.

A couple of hours later, the Director sent for him.

‘You have not lied,’ he said to him, looking at him less severely; ‘but to keep such an address is an imprudence the serious nature of which you cannot conceive. Unhappy boy! In ten years, perhaps, it will redound to your hurt.’

Chapter 27

First Experience of Life

The present moment, by God! is the ark of the Lord. Woe betide the man who lays his hand upon it.

DIDEROT

The reader will kindly excuse our giving but few clear and precise details of this epoch in Julien's life. Not that we lack them, far from it; but perhaps the life he led in the Seminary is too black for the modest colouring which we have sought to preserve in these pages. People who have been made to suffer by certain things cannot be reminded of them without a horror which paralyses every other pleasure, even that to be found in reading a story.

Julien met with little success in his attempts at hypocrisy in action; he passed through moments of disgust and even of complete discouragement. He was utterly unsuccessful, and that moreover in a vile career. The slightest help from without would have sufficed to restore his morale, the difficulty to be overcome was not great; but he was alone, as lonely as a vessel abandoned in mid-ocean. 'And if I should succeed,' he said to himself; 'to have to spend my whole life in such evil company! Gluttons who think of nothing but the ham omelette they are going to devour at dinner, or men like the abbe Castanede, to whom no crime is too black! They will rise to power; but at what a price, great God!

'Man's will is powerful, I see it written everywhere; but is it sufficiently so to overcome such repulsion? The task of great men has always been easy; however terrible was their danger, it was beautiful in their eyes; and who but myself can realise the ugliness of all that surrounds me?'

This was the most trying moment in his life. It was so easy for him to enlist in one of the fine regiments that were stationed at Besancon! He might become a teacher of Latin; he wanted so little to keep himself alive! But then, no career, no future for his imagination: it was a living death. Here is a detailed account of one of his wretched days.

‘My presumption has so often flattered itself upon my being different from the other young peasants! Well, I have lived long enough to see that difference breeds hatred,’ he said to himself one morning. This great truth had just been revealed to him by one of his most annoying failures. He had laboured for a week to make himself agreeable to a student who lived in the odour of sanctity. He was walking with him in the courtyard, listening submissively to idiocies that sent him to sleep as he walked. Suddenly a storm broke, the thunder growled, and the saintly student exclaimed, thrusting him rudely away:

‘Listen, each for himself in this world, I have no wish to be struck by lightning: God may blast you as an infidel, another Voltaire.’

His teeth clenched with rage and his eyes opened towards the sky furrowed by streaks of lightning: ‘I should deserve to be submerged, were I to let myself sleep during the storm!’ cried Julien. ‘Let us attempt the conquest of some other drudge.’

The bell rang for the abbe Castanede’s class of sacred history.

These young peasants who lived in such fear of the hard toil and poverty of their fathers, were taught that day by the abbe Castanede that that being so terrible in their eyes, the Government, had no real or legitimate power save what was delegated to it by God’s Vicar on Earth.

‘Render yourselves worthy of the Pope’s bounties by the sanctity of your lives, by your obedience, be like a rod in his hands,’ he went on, ‘and you will attain to a superb position where you will be in supreme command, under no man’s control; a permanent position, of which the Government pays one third of the emoluments, and the faithful, roused by your preaching, the other two thirds.’

On leaving his classroom, M. Castanede stopped in the courtyard.

‘You may well say of a cure, each man gets what he deserves,’ he said to the students who gathered round him. ‘I myself have known mountain parishes where the fees came to more than those of many town cures. There was as much in money, not to speak of the fat capons, eggs, fresh butter, and endless little delicacies; and there the cure takes the first place without challenge: no good meal to which he is not invited, made much of,’ etc.

No sooner had M. Castanede gone up to his own room, than the students divided into groups. Julien belonged to none of these; they drew away from him as from a tainted wether. In each of the groups, he saw a student toss a copper in the air, and if he guessed head or tail aright, his companions concluded that he would soon have one of these livings with fat fees.

Stories followed. One young priest, barely a year in orders, having presented a domestic rabbit to an old cure’s servant, had got the cure to ask for him as his assistant, and a few months afterwards, for the cure had died almost immediately, had succeeded him in a good living. Another had managed to have his name put forward for the eventual succession to the curacy of a prosperous country town, by attending all the meals of the paralytic old cure and carving his chickens for him gracefully.

The seminarists, like young men in every profession, exaggerated the effect of these little stratagems when they were out of the ordinary and struck the imagination.

‘I must,’ thought Julien, ‘take part in these conversations.’ When they were not discussing sausages and rich livings, their talk ran on the worldly side of ecclesiastical teaching; the differences between Bishops and Prefects, mayors and cures. Julien saw lurking in their minds the idea of a second God, but of a God far more to be feared and far more powerful than the first; this second God was the Pope. It was said, but with lowered voice, and when the speaker was quite certain of not being overheard by M. Pirard, that if the Pope did not take the trouble to appoint all the Prefects and all the mayors in France, it was because he had delegated the King of France for that duty, by naming him the Eldest Son of the Church.

It was about this time that Julien thought he might derive some benefit from his admiration for M. de Maistre's book on the Pope. He did, as a matter of fact, astonish his fellow-students; but this was a fresh misfortune. He annoyed them by expressing their opinions better than they could themselves. M. Chelan had been a rash counsellor for Julien as he had been for himself. After training him to the habit of reasoning accurately and not letting himself be taken in by vain words, he had omitted to tell him that in a person of little repute this habit is a crime; for sound reasoning always gives offence.

Julien's fine speech was therefore only another crime against him. His companions, being compelled to think about him, succeeded in finding two words to express all the horror with which he filled them: they nicknamed him Martin Luther; 'chiefly,' they said, 'because of that infernal logic of which he is so proud.'

Several young seminarists had fresher complexions and might be reckoned better looking than Julien; but he had white hands, and could not hide certain habits of personal cleanliness. This distinction was none at all in the grim dwelling into which destiny had cast him. The unclean peasants among whom he lived declared that he had extremely lax morals. We are afraid to tire the reader by an account of our hero's endless mishaps. To take one instance, the more vigorous among his companions tried to make a practice of thrashing him; he was obliged to arm himself with a metal compass and to inform them, but only by signs, that he would use it. Signs cannot be represented, in a spy's report, so damningly as words.

Chapter 28

A Procession

All hearts were moved. God's presence seemed to have come down into these narrow, gothic streets, decked on every side, and strewn with sand through the good offices of the faithful.

YOUNG†

† Tr. footnote: As in Chapter 26 I have left this motto in French. It seems, however, to be taken from Arthur Young rather and Edward. C. K. S. M.]

In vain might Julien make himself small and foolish, he could not give satisfaction, he was too different. 'And yet,' he said to himself, 'all these Professors are men of great discernment, and picked men, each of them one in a thousand; how is it they do not like my humility?' One alone seemed to him to be taking advantage of his readiness to believe anything and to appear taken in by everything. This was the abbe Chas–Bernard, Master of Ceremonies at the Cathedral, where, for the last fifteen years, he had been kept in hopes of a Canonry; in the meantime, he taught sacred eloquence at the Seminary. In the period of his blindness, this class was one of those in which Julien most regularly came out at the top. The abbe Chas had been led by this to show a partiality for him, and, at the end of his class, would gladly take his arm for a turn in the garden.

'What can his object be?' Julien asked himself. He found with amazement that, for hours on end, the abbe talked to him of the ornaments which the Cathedral possessed. It had seventeen apparelled chasubles, apart from the vestments worn at requiems. They had great hopes of President de Rubempre's widow; this lady, who was ninety years old, had preserved for at

least seventy of those years her wedding garments of superb Lyons stuffs, figured in gold. ‘Just imagine, my friend,’ said the abbe Chas coming to a standstill and opening his eyes wide, ‘these stuffs stand by themselves, there is so much gold in them. It is common opinion in Besancon that, under the Presidente’s will, the treasury of the Cathedral will be enriched with more than ten chasubles, not to mention four or five copes for the greater feasts. I will go farther,’ the abbe Chas added, lowering his voice. ‘I have good reason to think that the Presidente will bequeath to us eight magnificent silver-gilt candlesticks, which are supposed to have been bought in Italy, by the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, whose favourite minister was an ancestor of hers.’

‘But what is this man really aiming at behind all this frippery?’ Julien wondered. ‘This careful preparation has been going on for an age, and nothing comes of it. He must have singularly little faith in me! He is cleverer than any of the others, whose secret purposes one can see so plainly after a fortnight. I understand, this man’s ambition has been in torment for fifteen years.’

One evening, in the middle of the armed drill, Julien was sent for by the abbe Pirard, who said to him:

‘Tomorrow is the feast of Corpus Christi. M. l’abbe Chas–Bernard requires you to help him to decorate the Cathedral; go and obey.’

The abbe Pirard called him back, and added, in a tone of compassion:

‘It is for you to decide whether you wish to seize the opportunity of taking a stroll through the town.’

‘Incedo per ignes,’ replied Julien: which is to say, I am treading on dangerous ground.

Next morning at daybreak, Julien made his way to the Cathedral, walking with lowered eyes. The sight of the streets and the activity which was beginning to pervade the town did him good. On every side people were draping the fronts of their houses for the procession. All the time that he had spent in the Seminary seemed to him no more than an instant. His thoughts

were at Vergy, and with that charming Amanda Binet, whom he might meet, for her cafe was but little out of his way. He saw in the distance the abbe Chas–Bernard, standing by the door of his beloved Cathedral; he was a large man with a joyful countenance and an open air. This morning he was triumphant: ‘I have been waiting for you, my dear son,’ he called out, as soon as he caught sight of Julien, ‘you are welcome. Our labours this day will be long and hard, let us fortify ourselves with an early breakfast; the other we shall take at ten o’clock during high mass.’

‘I desire, Sir,’ Julien said to him with an air of gravity, ‘not to be left alone for a moment; kindly observe,’ he added, pointing to the clock above their heads, ‘that I have arrived at one minute before five.’

‘Ah! So you are afraid of those young rascals at the Seminary! It is too kind of you to give them a thought,’ said the abbe Chas; ‘is a road any the worse, because there are thorns in the hedges on either side of it? The traveller goes his way and leaves the wicked thorns to wither where they are. However, we must to work, my dear friend, to work.’

The abbe Chas had been right in saying that their labours would be hard. There had been a great funeral service in the Cathedral the day before; it had been impossible to make any preparations; they were obliged, therefore, in the course of the morning, to drape each of the gothic pillars which separate the nave from the aisles in a sort of jacket of red damask which rose to a height of thirty feet. The Bishop had ordered four decorators from Paris by mail coach, but these gentlemen could not do everything themselves, and so far from encouraging the awkward efforts of their Bisontine colleagues they increased their awkwardness by laughing at it.

Julien saw that he would have to go up the ladders himself, his agility stood him in good stead. He undertook to direct the local decorators in person. The abbe Chas was in ecstasies as he watched him spring from one ladder to another. When all the pillars were hung with damask, the next thing was to go and place five enormous bunches of plumes on top of the great baldachino, over the high altar. A richly gilded wooden crown was supported on eight great twisted columns of Italian marble. But, in order to reach the centre of the baldachino, over the tabernacle, one had to step across an old wooden cornice, possibly worm-eaten, and forty feet from the ground.

The sight of this perilous ascent had extinguished the gaiety, so brilliant until then, of the Parisian decorators; they looked at it from beneath, discussed it volubly, and did not go up. Julien took possession of the bunches of plumes, and ran up the ladder. He arranged them admirably upon the ornament in the form of a crown in the centre of the baldachino. As he stepped down from the ladder, the abbe Chas–Bernard took him in his arms.

'Optime!' exclaimed the worthy priest, 'I shall tell Monseigneur of this.'

Their ten o'clock breakfast was a merry feast. Never had the abbe Chas seen his church looking so well.

'My dear disciple,' he said to Julien, 'my mother used to hire out chairs in this venerable fane, so that I was brought up in this great edifice. Robespierre's Terror ruined us; but, at eight years old, as I then was, I was already serving masses in private houses, and their owners gave me my dinner on mass days. No one could fold a chasuble better than I, the gold braid was never broken. Since the restoration of the Faith by Napoleon, it has been my happy lot to take charge of everything in this venerable mother church. On five days in the year, my eyes behold it decked out with these beautiful ornaments. But never has it been so resplendent, never have the damask strips been so well hung as they are today, have they clung so to the pillars.'

'At last, he is going to tell me his secret,' thought Julien, 'here he is talking to me of himself; he is beginning to expand.' But nothing imprudent was said by this man, evidently in an excited state. 'And yet he has worked hard, he is happy,' Julien said to himself, 'the good wine has not been spared. What a man! What an example for me! He takes the prize.' (This was a low expression which he had picked up from the old surgeon.)

When the Sanctus bell rang during high mass, Julien wished to put on a surplice so as to follow the Bishop in the superb procession.

'And the robbers, my friend, the robbers!' cried the abbe Chas, 'you forget them. The procession is going out; the church will be left empty; we must keep watch, you and I. We shall be fortunate if we lose only a couple of ells of that fine braid which goes round the base of the pillars. That is another

gift from Madame de Rubempre; it comes from the famous Count, her great-grandfather; it is pure gold, my friend,' the abbe went on, whispering in his ear, and with an air of evident exaltation, 'nothing false about it! I entrust to you the inspection of the north aisle, do not stir from it. I keep for myself the south aisle and nave. Keep an eye on the confessionals; it is there that the robbers' women spies watch for the moment when our backs are turned.'

As he finished speaking, the quarter before twelve struck, at once the big bell began to toll. It was being pulled with all the ringers' might; the rich and solemn sound stirred Julien deeply. His imagination rose from the ground.

The odour of the incense and of the rose leaves strewn before the Blessed Sacrament by children dressed as little Saint Johns, intensified his excitement.

The sober note of the bell ought to have suggested to Julien only the thought of the work of a score of men earning fifty centimes, and assisted perhaps by fifteen or twenty of the faithful. He ought to have thought of the wear and tear of the ropes, of the timber, of the danger from the bell itself which fell every two hundred years, and to have planned some way of diminishing the wage of the ringers, or of paying them with some indulgence or other favour drawn from the spiritual treasury of the Church, with no strain upon her purse.

In place of these sage reflections, Julien's soul, excited by these rich and virile sounds, was straying through imaginary space. Never will he make either a good priest or a great administrator. Souls that are moved thus are capable at most of producing an artist. Here Julien's presumption breaks out in the full light of day. Fifty, perhaps, of his fellow seminarists, made attentive to the realities of life by the public hatred and Jacobinism which, they are told, is lurking behind every hedge, on hearing the big bell of the Cathedral, would have thought only of the wages paid to the ringers. They would have applied the genius of a Bareme to determine the question whether the degree of emotion aroused in the public was worth the money given to the ringers. Had Julien chosen to give his mind to the material interests of the Cathedral, his imagination flying beyond its goal would have thought of saving forty francs for the Chapter, and would have let slip the opportunity of avoiding an outlay of twenty-five centimes.

While, in the most perfect weather ever seen, the procession wound its way slowly through Besancon, and halted at the glittering stations which all the local authorities had vied with one another in erecting, the church remained wrapped in a profound silence. A suffused light, an agreeable coolness reigned in it; it was still balmy with the fragrance of flowers and incense.

The silence, the profound solitude, the coolness of the long aisles, made Julien's musings all the sweeter. He had no fear of being disturbed by the abbe Chas, who was occupied in another part of the building. His soul had almost quitted its mortal envelope, which was strolling at a slow pace along the north aisle committed to his charge. He was all the more at rest, since he was certain that there was nobody in the confessionals save a few devout women; he saw without observing.

His distraction was nevertheless half conquered by the sight of two women extremely well dressed who were kneeling, one of them in a confessional, the other, close beside her, upon a chair. He saw without observing them; at the same time, whether from a vague sense of his duty, or from admiration of the plain but noble attire of these ladies, he remarked that there was no priest in that confessional. 'It is strange,' he thought, 'that these beautiful ladies are not kneeling before some station, if they are religious; or placed in good seats in the front of some balcony, if they are fashionable. How well cut that gown is! What grace!' He slackened his pace in order to see their faces.

The one who was kneeling in the confessional turned her head slightly on hearing the sound of Julien's step amid the prevailing silence. All at once she gave a little cry, and fainted.

As her strength left her, this kneeling lady fell back; her friend, who was close at hand, hastened to the rescue. At the same time Julien caught sight of the shoulders of the lady who had fallen back. A rope of large seed pearls, well known to him, caught his eye. What was his state when he recognised the hair of Madame de Renal! It was she. The lady who was trying to hold up her head, and to arrest her fall, was Madame Derville. Julien, beside himself with emotion, sprang forward; Madame de Renal's fall would perhaps have brought down her friend if he had not supported them. He saw Madame de Renal's head, pale, absolutely devoid of consciousness,

drooping upon her shoulder. He helped Madame Derville to prop that charming head against the back of a straw chair; he was on his knees.

Madame Derville turned and recognised him.

‘Fly, Sir, fly!’ she said to him in accents of the most burning anger. ‘On no account must she see you again. The sight of you must indeed fill her with horror, she was so happy before you came! Your behaviour is atrocious. Fly; be off with you, if you have any shame left.’

This speech was uttered with such authority, and Julien felt so weak at the moment, that he withdrew. ‘She always hated me,’ he said to himself, thinking of Madame Derville.

At that moment, the nasal chant of the leading priests in the procession rang through the church; the procession was returning. The abbe Chas–Bernard called repeatedly to Julien, who at first did not hear him: finally he came and led him by the arm from behind a pillar where Julien had taken refuge more dead than alive. He wished to present him to the Bishop.

‘You are feeling unwell, my child,’ said the abbe, seeing him so pale and almost unable to walk; ‘you have been working too hard.’ The abbe gave him his arm. ‘Come, sit down here, on the sacristan’s little stool, behind me; I shall screen you.’ They were now by the side of the main door. ‘Calm yourself, we have still a good twenty minutes before Monseigneur appears. Try to recover yourself; when he passes, I shall hold you up, for I am strong and vigorous, in spite of my age.’

But when the Bishop passed, Julien was so tremulous that the abbe Chas abandoned the idea of presenting him.

‘Do not worry yourself about it,’ he told him, ‘I shall find another opportunity.’

That evening, he sent down to the chapel of the Seminary ten pounds of candles, saved, he said, by Julien’s efforts and the rapidity with which he extinguished them. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. The poor boy was himself extinguished; he had not had a thought in his head after seeing Madame de Renal.

Chapter 29

The First Step

He knew his times, he knew his departement, and he is rich.

Le Precurseur

Julien had not yet recovered from the profound abstraction in which the incident in the Cathedral had plunged him, when one morning the grim abbe Pirard sent for him.

‘Here is M. l’abbe Chas–Bernard writing to me to commend you. I am quite satisfied with your conduct as a whole. You are extremely imprudent and indeed stupid, without showing it; however, up to the present your heart is sound and even generous; your intellect is above the average. Taking you all in all, I see a spark in you which must not be neglected.

‘After fifteen years of labour, I am on the eve of leaving this establishment: my crime is that of having allowed the seminarists to use their own judgment, and of having neither protected nor unmasked that secret society of which you have spoken to me at the stool of penitence. Before I go, I wish to do something for you; I should have acted two months ago, for you deserve it, but for the accusation based upon the address of Amanda Binet, which was found in your possession. I appoint you tutor in the New and Old Testaments.’

Julien, in a transport of gratitude, quite thought of falling on his knees and thanking God; but he yielded to a more genuine impulse. He went up to the abbe Pirard and took his hand, which he raised to his lips.

‘What is this?’ cried the Director in a tone of annoyance; but Julien’s eyes were even more eloquent than his action.

The abbe Pirard gazed at him in astonishment, like a man who, in the course of long years, has fallen out of the way of meeting with delicate emotions. This attention pierced the Director’s armour; his voice changed.

‘Ah, well! Yes, my child, I am attached to you. Heaven knows that it is entirely against my will. I ought to be just, and to feel neither hatred nor love for anyone. Your career will be difficult. I see in you something that offends the common herd. Jealousy and calumny will pursue you. In whatever place Providence may set you, your companions will never set eyes on you without hating you; and if they pretend to love you, it will be in order to betray you the more surely. For this there is but one remedy: have recourse only to God, who has given you, to punish you for your presumption, this necessity of being hated; let your conduct be pure; that is the sole resource that I can see for you. If you hold fast to the truth with an invincible embrace, sooner or later your enemies will be put to confusion.”

It was so long since Julien had heard a friendly voice, that we must forgive him a weakness: he burst into tears. The abbe Pirard opened his arms to embrace him; the moment was very precious to them both.

Julien was wild with joy; this promotion was the first that he had obtained; the advantages were immense. In order to realise them, one must have been condemned to pass whole months without a moment’s solitude, and in immediate contact with companions at best tiresome, and mostly intolerable. Their shouts alone would have been enough to create disorder in a sensitive organism. The boisterous joy of these peasants well fed and well dressed, could find expression, thought itself complete only when they were shouting with the full force of their lungs.

Now Julien dined by himself, or almost so, an hour later than the rest of the seminarists. He had a key to the garden, and might walk there at the hours when it was empty.

Greatly to his surprise, Julien noticed that they hated him less; he had been expecting, on the contrary, an intensification of their hatred. That secret

desire that no one should speak to him, which was all too apparent and had made him so many enemies, was no longer a sign of absurd pride. In the eyes of the coarse beings among whom he lived, it was a proper sense of his own dignity. Their hatred diminished perceptibly, especially among the youngest of his companions, now become his pupils, whom he treated with great courtesy. In course of time he had even supporters; it became bad form to call him Martin Luther.

But why speak of his friends, his enemies? It is all so ugly, and all the more ugly, the more accurately it is drawn from life. These are however the only teachers of ethics that the people have, and without them where should we be? Will the newspaper ever manage to take the place of the parish priest?

Since Julien's promotion, the Director of the Seminary made a point of never speaking to him except in the presence of witnesses. This was only prudent, in the master's interest as well as the pupil's; but more than anything else it was a test. The stern Jansenist Pirard's invariable principle was: 'Has a man any merit in your eyes? Place an obstacle in the way of everything that he desires, everything that he undertakes. If his merit be genuine, he will certainly be able to surmount or thrust aside your obstacles.'

It was the hunting season. Fouque took it into his head to send to the Seminary a stag and a boar in the name of Julien's family. The dead animals were left lying in the passage, between kitchen and refectory. There all the seminarists saw them on their way to dinner. They aroused much interest. The boar, although stone dead, frightened the younger boys; they fingered his tusks. Nothing else was spoken of for a week.

This present, which classified Julien's family in the section of society that one must respect, dealt a mortal blow to jealousy. It was a form of superiority consecrated by fortune. Chazel and the most distinguished of the seminarists made overtures to him, and almost complained to him that he had not warned them of his parents' wealth, and had thus betrayed them into showing a want of respect for money.

There was a conscription from which Julien was exempt in his capacity as a seminarist. This incident moved him deeply. 'And so there has passed now

for ever the moment at which, twenty years ago, a heroic life would have begun for me!'

Walking by himself in the Seminary garden, he overheard a conversation between two masons who were at work upon the enclosing wall.

'Ah, well! One will have to go, here's another conscription.'

In the other man's days, well and good! A stone mason became an officer, and became a general, that has been known.'

'Look what it's like now! Only the beggars go. A man with the wherewithal stays at home.'

'The man who is born poor stays poor, and that's all there is to it.'

'Tell me, now, is it true what people say, that the other is dead?' put in a third mason.

'It's the big ones who say that, don't you see? They were afraid of the other.'

'What a difference, how well everything went in his time! And to think that he was betrayed by his Marshals! There must always be a traitor somewhere!'

This conversation comforted Julien a little. As he walked away he repeated to himself with a sigh:

'The only King whose memory the people cherish still!'

The examinations came round. Julien answered the questions in a brilliant manner; he saw that Chazel himself was seeking to display the whole extent of his knowledge.

On the first day, the examiners appointed by the famous Vicar–General de Frilair greatly resented having always to place first, or at the very most second on their list this Julien Sorel who had been pointed out to them as the favourite of the abbe Pirard. Wagers were made in the Seminary that in the aggregate list of the examinations, Julien would occupy the first place, a

distinction that carried with it the honour of dining with the Bishop. But at the end of one session, in which the subject had been the Fathers of the Church, a skilful examiner, after questioning Julien upon Saint Jerome, and his passion for Cicero, began to speak of Horace, Virgil and other profane authors. Unknown to his companions, Julien had learned by heart a great number of passages from these authors. Carried away by his earlier successes, he forgot where he was and, at the repeated request of the examiner, recited and paraphrased with enthusiasm several odes of Horace. Having let him sink deeper and deeper for twenty minutes, suddenly the examiner's face changed, and he delivered a stinging rebuke to Julien for having wasted his time in these profane studies, and stuffed his head with useless if not criminal thoughts.

'I am a fool, Sir, and you are right,' said Julien with a modest air, as he saw the clever stratagem by which he had been taken in.

This ruse on the examiner's part was considered a dirty trick, even in the Seminary, though this did not prevent M. l'abbe de Frilair, that clever man, who had so ably organised the framework of the Bisontine Congregation, and whose reports to Paris made judges, prefect, and even the general officers of the garrison tremble, from setting, with his powerful hand, the number 198 against Julien's name. He was delighted thus to mortify his enemy, the Jansenist Pirard.

For the last ten years his great ambition had been to remove Pirard from control of the Seminary. That cleric, following in his own conduct the principles which he had outlined to Julien, was sincere, devout, innocent of intrigue, devoted to his duty. But heaven, in its wrath, had given him that splenetic temperament, bound to feel deeply insults and hatred. Not one of the affronts that were put upon him was lost upon his ardent spirit. He would have offered his resignation a hundred times, but he believed that he was of use in the post in which Providence had placed him. 'I prevent the spread of Jesuitry and idolatry,' he used to say to himself.

At the time of the examinations, it was perhaps two months since he had spoken to Julien, and yet he was ill for a week, when, on receiving the official letter announcing the result of the competition, he saw the number 198 set against the name of that pupil whom he regarded as the glory of his

establishment. The only consolation for this stern character was to concentrate upon Julien all the vigilance at his command. He was delighted to find in him neither anger nor thoughts of revenge, nor discouragement.

Some weeks later, Julien shuddered on receiving a letter; it bore the Paris postmark. ‘At last,’ he thought, ‘Madame de Renal has remembered her promises.’ A gentleman who signed himself Paul Sorel, and professed to be related to him, sent him a bill of exchange for five hundred francs. The writer added that if Julien continued to study with success the best Latin authors, a similar sum would be sent to him every year.

‘It is she, it is her bounty!’ Julien said to himself with emotion, ‘she wishes to comfort me; but why is there not one word of affection?’

He was mistaken with regard to the letter; Madame de Renal, under the influence of her friend Madame Derville, was entirely absorbed in her own profound remorse. In spite of herself, she often thought of the strange creature whose coming into her life had so upset it, but she would never have dreamed of writing to him.

If we spoke the language of the Seminary, we might see a miracle in this windfall of five hundred francs, and say that it was M. de Frilair himself that heaven had employed to make this gift to Julien.

Twelve years earlier, M. l’abbe de Frilair had arrived at Besancon with the lightest of portmanteaux, which, the story went, contained his entire fortune. He now found himself one of the wealthiest landowners in the Department. In the course of his growing prosperity he had purchased one half of an estate of which the other half passed by inheritance to M. de La Mole. Hence a great lawsuit between these worthies.

Despite his brilliant existence in Paris, and the posts which he held at court, the Marquis de La Mole felt that it was dangerous to fight down at Besancon against a Vicar–General who was reputed to make and unmake Prefects. Instead of asking for a gratuity of fifty thousand francs, disguised under some head or other that would pass in the budget, and allowing M. de Frilair to win this pettifogging action for fifty thousand francs, the Marquis took offence. He believed that he had a case: a fine reason!

For, if we may be so bold as to say it: what judge is there who has not a son, or at least a cousin to help on in the world?

To enlighten the less clear-sighted, a week after the first judgment that he obtained, M. l'abbe de Frilair took the Bishop's carriage, and went in person to convey the Cross of the Legion of Honour to his counsel. M. de La Mole, somewhat dismayed by the bold front assumed by the other side, and feeling that his own counsel were weakening, asked the advice of the abbe Chelan, who put him in touch with M. Pirard.

At the date of our story they had been corresponding thus for some years. The abbe Pirard dashed into the business with all the force of his passionate nature. In constant communication with the Marquis's counsel, he studied his case, and finding him to be in the right, openly declared himself a partisan of the Marquis de La Mole against the all powerful Vicar–General. The latter was furious at such insolence, and coming from a little Jansenist to boot!

'You see what these court nobles are worth who claim to have such power!' the abbe de Frilair would say to his intimates; 'M. de La Mole has not sent so much as a wretched Cross to his agent at Besancon, and is going to allow him to be deprived of his post without a murmur. And yet, my friends write to me, this noble peer never allows a week to pass without going to show off his blue riband in the drawing-room of the Keeper of the Seals, for what that is worth.'

In spite of all M. Pirard's activity, and albeit M. de La Mole was always on the best of terms with the Minister of Justice and still more with his officials, all that he had been able to achieve, after six years of constant effort, was to avoid actually losing his case.

In ceaseless correspondence with the abbe Pirard, over an affair which they both pursued with passion, the Marquis came in time to appreciate the abbe's type of mind. Gradually, despite the immense gulf between their social positions, their correspondence took on a tone of friendship. The abbe Pirard told the Marquis that his enemies were seeking to oblige him, by their insults, to offer his resignation. In the anger which he felt at the infamous

stratagem (according to him) employed against Julien, he related the latter's story to the Marquis.

Although extremely rich, this great nobleman was not in the least a miser. He had never once been able to make the abbe Pirard accept so much as the cost of postage occasioned by the lawsuit. He took the opportunity to send five hundred francs to the abbe's favourite pupil.

M. de La Mole took the trouble to write the covering letter with his own hand. This set him thinking of the abbe.

One day the latter received a short note in which he was requested to call at once, upon urgent business, at an inn on the outskirts of Besancon. There he found M. de La Mole's steward.

'M. le Marquis has instructed me to bring you his carriage,' he was informed. 'He hopes that after you have read this letter, you will find it convenient to start for Paris, in four or five days from now. I am going to employ the time which you will be so kind as to indicate to me in visiting the estates of M. le Marquis in the Franche–Comte. After which, on whatever day suits you, we shall start for Paris.'

The letter was brief:

'Rid yourself, my dear Sir, of all these provincial bickerings, come and breathe a calmer air in Paris. I am sending you my carriage, which has orders to await your decision for four days. I shall wait for you myself, in Paris, until Tuesday. It requires only the word yes, from you, Sir, to make me accept in your name one of the best livings in the neighbourhood of Paris. The wealthiest of your future parishioners has never set eyes on you, but is devoted to you more warmly than you can suppose; he is the Marquis de La Mole.'

Without knowing it, the stern abbe Pirard loved this Seminary, peopled with his enemies, to which, for fifteen years, he had devoted all his thoughts. M. de La Mole's letter was to him like the sudden appearance of a surgeon with the duty of performing a painful but necessary operation. His dismissal was certain. He gave the steward an appointment, in three days' time.

For the next forty-eight hours, he was in a fever of uncertainty. Finally, he wrote to M. de La Mole and composed, for the Bishop's benefit, a letter, a masterpiece of ecclesiastical diction, though a trifle long. It would have been difficult to find language more irreproachable, or breathing a more sincere respect. And yet this letter, intended to give M. de Frilair a trying hour with his patron, enumerated all the serious grounds for complaint and descended to the sordid little pinpricks which, after he had borne them, with resignation, for six years, were forcing the abbe Pirard to leave the diocese.

They stole the wood from his shed, they poisoned his dog, etc., etc.

This letter written, he sent to awaken Julien who, at eight o'clock in the evening, was already asleep, as were all the seminarists.

'You know where the Bishop's Palace is?' he said to him in the best Latin; 'take this letter to Monseigneur. I shall not attempt to conceal from you that I am sending you amongst wolves. Be all eyes and ears. No prevarication in your answers; but remember that the man who is questioning you would perhaps take a real delight in trying to harm you. I am glad, my child, to give you this experience before I leave you, for I do not conceal from you that the letter which you are taking contains my resignation.'

Julien did not move; he was fond of the abbe Pirard. In vain might prudence warn him:

'After this worthy man's departure, the Sacred Heart party will degrade and perhaps even expel me.'

He could not think about himself. What embarrassed him was a sentence which he wished to cast in a polite form, but really he was incapable of using his mind.

'Well, my friend, aren't you going?'

'You see, Sir, they say,' Julien began timidly, 'that during your long administration here, you have never put anything aside. I have six hundred francs.'

Tears prevented him from continuing.

‘That too will be noticed,’ said the ex-Director of the Seminary coldly. ‘Go to the Palace, it is getting late.’

As luck would have it, that evening M. l’abbe de Frilair was in attendance in the Bishop’s parlour; Monseigneur was dining at the Prefecture. So that it was to M. de Frilair himself that Julien gave the letter, but he did not know who he was.

Julien saw with astonishment that this priest boldly opened the letter addressed to the Bishop. The fine features of the Vicar–General soon revealed a surprise mingled with keen pleasure, and his gravity increased. While he was reading, Julien, struck by his good looks, had time to examine him. It was a face that would have had more gravity but for the extreme subtlety that appeared in certain of its features, and would actually have suggested dishonesty, if the owner of that handsome face had ceased for a moment to control it. The nose, which was extremely prominent, formed an unbroken and perfectly straight line, and gave unfortunately to a profile that otherwise was most distinguished, an irremediable resemblance to the mask of a fox. In addition, this abbe who seemed so greatly interested in M. Pirard’s resignation, was dressed with an elegance that greatly pleased Julien, who had never seen its like on any other priest.

It was only afterwards that Julien learned what was the abbe de Frilair’s special talent. He knew how to amuse his Bishop, a pleasant old man, made to live in Paris, who regarded Besancon as a place of exile. This Bishop was extremely short-sighted, and passionately fond of fish. The abbe de Frilair used to remove the bones from the fish that was set before Monseigneur.

Julien was silently watching the abbe as he read over again the letter of resignation, when suddenly the door burst open. A lackey, richly attired, passed rapidly through the room. Julien had barely time to turn towards the door; he saw a little old man, wearing a pectoral cross. He fell on his knees: the Bishop bestowed a kind smile upon him as he passed through the room. The handsome abbe followed him, and Julien was left alone in this parlour, the pious magnificence of which he could now admire at his leisure.

The Bishop of Besancon, a man of character, tried, but not crushed by the long hardships of the Emigration, was more than seventy-five, and cared

infinitely little about what might happen in the next ten years.

‘Who is that clever-looking seminarist, whom I seemed to see as I passed?’ said the Bishop. ‘Ought they not, by my orders, to be in their beds at this hour?’

‘This one is quite wide awake, I assure you, Monseigneur, and he brings great news: the resignation of the only Jansenist left in your diocese. That terrible abbe Pirard understands at last the meaning of a hint.’

‘Well,’ said the Bishop with a laugh, ‘I defy you to fill his place with a man of his quality. And to show you the value of the man, I invite him to dine with me tomorrow.’

The Vicar–General wished to insinuate a few words as to the choice of a successor. The prelate, little disposed to discuss business, said to him:

‘Before we put in the next man, let us try to discover why this one is going. Fetch me in that seminarist, the truth is to be found in the mouths of babes.’

Julien was summoned: ‘I shall find myself trapped between two inquisitors,’ he thought. Never had he felt more courageous.

At the moment of his entering the room, two tall valets, better dressed than M. Valenod himself, were disrobing Monseigneur. The prelate, before coming to the subject of M. Pirard, thought fit to question Julien about his studies. He touched upon dogma, and was amazed. Presently he turned to the Humanities, Virgil, Horace, Cicero. ‘Those names,’ thought Julien, ‘earned me my number 198. I have nothing more to lose, let us try to shine.’ He was successful; the prelate, an excellent humanist himself, was enchanted.

At dinner at the Prefecture, a girl, deservedly famous, had recited the poem of La Madeleine.† He was in the mood for literary conversation, and at once forgot the abbe Pirard and everything else, in discussing with the seminarist the important question, whether Horace had been rich or poor. The prelate quoted a number of odes, but at times his memory began to fail him, and immediately Julien would recite the entire ode, with a modest air; what struck the Bishop was that Julien never departed from the tone of the conversation; he said his twenty or thirty Latin verses as he would have

spoken of what was going on in his Seminary. A long discussion followed of Virgil and Cicero. At length the prelate could not refrain from paying the young seminarist a compliment.

† A poem by Delphine Gay]

‘It would be impossible to have studied to better advantage.’

‘Monseigneur,’ said Julien, ‘your Seminary can furnish you with one hundred and ninety-seven subjects far less unworthy of your esteemed approval.’

‘How so?’ said the prelate, astonished at this figure.

‘I can support with official proof what I have the honour to say before Monseigneur.

‘At the annual examination of the Seminary, answering questions upon these very subjects which have earned me, at this moment, Monseigneur’s approval, I received the number 198.’

‘Ah! This is the abbe Pirard’s favourite,’ exclaimed the Bishop, with a laugh, and with a glance at M. de Frilair; ‘we ought to have expected this; but it is all in fair play. Is it not the case, my friend,’ he went on, turning to Julien, ‘that they waked you from your sleep to send you here?’

‘Yes, Monseigneur. I have never left the Seminary alone in my life but once, to go and help M. l’abbe Chas–Bernard to decorate the Cathedral, on the feast of Corpus Christi.’

‘Optime,’ said the Bishop; ‘what, it was you that showed such great courage, by placing the bunches of plumes on the baldachino? They make me shudder every year; I am always afraid of their costing me a man’s life. My friend, you will go far; but I do not wish to cut short your career, which will be brilliant, by letting you die of hunger.’

And, on an order from the Bishop, the servants brought in biscuits and Malaga wine, to which Julien did honour, and even more so than abbe

Frilair, who knew that his Bishop liked to see him eat cheerfully and with a good appetite.

The prelate, growing more and more pleased with the close of his evening, spoke for a moment of ecclesiastical history. He saw that Julien did not understand. He then passed to the moral conditions of the Roman Empire, under the Emperors of the Age of Constantine. The last days of paganism were accompanied by that state of uneasiness and doubt which, in the nineteenth century, is disturbing sad and weary minds. Monseigneur remarked that Julien seemed hardly to know even the name of Tacitus.

Julien replied with candour, to the astonishment of the prelate, that this author was not to be found in the library of the Seminary.

'I am really delighted to hear it,' said the Bishop merrily. 'You relieve me of a difficulty; for the last ten minutes, I have been trying to think of a way of thanking you for the pleasant evening which you have given me, and certainly in a most unexpected manner. Although the gift is scarcely canonical, I should like to give you a set of Tacitus.'

The prelate sent for eight volumes handsomely bound, and insisted upon writing with his own hand, on the title-page of the first, a Latin inscription to Julien Sorel. The Bishop prided himself on his fine Latinity; he ended by saying to him, in a serious tone, completely at variance with his tone throughout the rest of the conversation:

'Young man, if you are wise, you shall one day have the best living in my diocese, and not a hundred leagues from my episcopal Palace; but you must be wise.'

Julien, burdened with his volumes, left the Palace, in great bewilderment, as midnight was striking.

Monseigneur had not said a word to him about the abbe Pirard. Julien was astonished most of all by the extreme politeness shown him by the Bishop. He had never imagined such an urbanity of form, combined with so natural an air of dignity. He was greatly struck by the contrast when he set eyes once more on the sombre abbe Pirard, who awaited him with growing impatience.

‘Quid tibi dixerunt? (What did they say to you?)’ he shouted at the top of his voice, the moment Julien came within sight.

Then, as Julien found some difficulty in translating the Bishop’s conversation into Latin:

‘Speak French, and repeat to me Monseigneur’s own words, without adding or omitting anything,’ said the ex-Director of the Seminary, in his harsh tone and profoundly inelegant manner.

‘What a strange present for a Bishop to make to a young seminarist,’ he said as he turned the pages of the sumptuous Tacitus, the gilded edges of which seemed to fill him with horror.

Two o’clock was striking when, after a detailed report of everything, he allowed his favourite pupil to retire to his own room.

‘Leave me the first volume of your Tacitus, which contains the Bishop’s inscription,’ he said to him. ‘That line of Latin will be your lightning conductor in this place, when I have gone.

‘Erit tibi, fili mi, successor meus tanquam leo quaerens quern devoret. (My successor will be to you, my son, as a lion seeking whom he may devour.)’

On the following morning, Julien detected something strange in the manner in which his companions addressed him. This made him all the more reserved. ‘Here,’ he thought, ‘we have the effect of M. Pirard’s resignation. It is known throughout the place, and I am supposed to be his favourite. There must be an insult behind this attitude’; but he could not discover it. There was, on the contrary, an absence of hatred in the eyes of all whom he encountered in the dormitories. ‘What can this mean? It is doubtless a trap, we are playing a close game.’ At length the young seminarist from Verrieres said to him with a laugh: ‘Cornelii Taciti opera omnia (Complete Works of Tacitus).’

At this speech, which was overheard, all the rest seemed to vie with one another in congratulating Julien, not only upon the magnificent present which he had received from Monseigneur, but also upon the two hours of conversation with which he had been honoured. It was common knowledge,

down to the most trifling details. From this moment, there was no more jealousy; everyone paid court to him most humbly; the abbe Castanede who, only yesterday, had treated him with the utmost insolence, came to take him by the arm and invited him to luncheon.

Owing to a weakness in Julien's character, the insolence of these coarse creatures had greatly distressed him; their servility caused him disgust and no pleasure.

Towards midday, the abbe Pirard took leave of his pupils, not without first delivering a severe allocution. 'Do you seek the honours of this world,' he said to them, 'all social advantages, the pleasure of commanding men, that of defying the laws and of being insolent to all men with impunity? Or indeed do you seek your eternal salvation? The most ignorant among you have only to open their eyes to distinguish between the two paths.'

No sooner had he left than the devotees of the Sacred Heart of Jesus went to chant a Te Deum in the chapel. Nobody in the Seminary took the late Director's allocution seriously. 'He is very cross at being dismissed,' was what might be heard on all sides. Not one seminarist was simple enough to believe in the voluntary resignation of a post which provided so many opportunities for dealing with the big contractors.

The abbe Pirard took up his abode in the best inn in Besancon; and on the pretext of some imaginary private affairs, proposed to spend a couple of days there.

The Bishop invited him to dinner, and, to tease his Vicar–General, de Frilair, endeavoured to make him shine. They had reached the dessert when there arrived from Paris the strange tidings that the abbe Pirard was appointed to the splendid living of N —— , within four leagues of the capital. The worthy prelate congratulated him sincerely. He saw in the whole affair a well played game which put him in a good humour and gave him the highest opinion of the abbe's talents. He bestowed upon him a magnificent certificate in Latin, and silenced the abbe de Frilair, who ventured to make remonstrances.

That evening, Monseigneur carried his admiration to the drawing-room of the Marquise de Rubempre. It was a great piece of news for the select

society of Besancon; people were lost in conjectures as to the meaning of this extraordinary favour. They saw the abbe Pirard a Bishop already. The sharper wits supposed M. de La Mole to have become a Minister, and allowed themselves that evening to smile at the imperious airs which M. l'abbe de Frilair assumed in society.

Next morning, the abbe Pirard was almost followed through the streets, and the tradesmen came out to their shop-doors when he went to beg an audience of the Marquis's judges. For the first time, he was received by them with civility. The stern Jansenist, indignant at everything that he saw around him, spent a long time at work with the counsel whom he had chosen for the Marquis de La Mole, and then left for Paris. He was so foolish as to say to two or three lifelong friends who escorted him to the carriage and stood admiring its heraldic blason, that after governing the Seminary for fifteen years he was leaving Besancon with five hundred and twenty francs in savings. These friends embraced him with tears in their eyes, and then said to one another: The good abbe might have spared himself that lie, it is really too absurd.'

The common herd, blinded by love of money, were not fitted to understand that it was in his sincerity that the abbe Pirard had found the strength to fight single-handed for six years against Marie Alacoque, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Jesuits and his Bishop.

Chapter 30

Ambition

There is only one true nobility left; namely, the title of Duke; Marquis is absurd, at the word Duke one turns one's head.

The Edinburgh Review

[Trans. footnote: I have translated this motto, which is quoted in French by Stendahl, but have not been able to find the original passage in the Edinburgh Review. C. K. S. M.]

The Marquis de La Mole received the abbe Pirard without any of those little mannerisms of a great gentleman, outwardly so polite, but so impertinent to him who understands them. It would have been a waste of time, and the Marquis was so far immersed in public business as to have no time to waste.

For six months he had been intriguing to make both King and nation accept a certain Ministry, which, as a mark of gratitude, would make him a Duke.

The Marquis had appealed in vain, year after year, to his lawyer at Besancon for a clear and definite report on his lawsuits in the Franche–Comte. How was the eminent lawyer to explain them to him, if he did not understand them himself?

The little slip of paper which the abbe gave him explained everything.

'My dear abbe,' said the Marquis, after polishing off in less than five minutes all the polite formulas and personal inquiries, 'my dear abbe, in the midst of my supposed prosperity, I lack the time to occupy myself seriously

with two little matters which nevertheless are of considerable importance: my family and my affairs. I take the greatest interest in the fortunes of my house, I may carry it far; I look after my pleasures, and that is what must come before everything else, at least in my eyes,' he went on, noticing the astonishment in the eyes of the abbe Pirard. Although a man of sense, the abbe was amazed to see an old man talking so openly of his pleasures.

'Work does no doubt exist in Paris,' the great nobleman continued, 'but perched in the attics; and as soon as I come in contact with a man, he takes an apartment on the second floor, and his wife starts a day; consequently, no more work, no effort except to be or to appear to be a man of fashion. That is their sole interest once they are provided with bread.

'For my lawsuits, to be strictly accurate, and also for each lawsuit separately, I have lawyers who work themselves to death; one of them died of consumption, the day before yesterday. But, for my affairs in general, would you believe, Sir, that for the last three years I have given up hope of finding a man who, while he is writing for me, will deign to think a little seriously of what he is doing. However, all this is only a preamble.

'I respect you, and, I would venture to add, although we meet for the first time, I like you. Will you be my secretary, with a salary of eight thousand francs, or indeed twice that sum? I shall gain even more, I assure you; and I shall make it my business to keep your fine living for you, for the day on which we cease to agree.'

The abbe declined, but towards the end of the conversation, the sight of the Marquis's genuine embarrassment suggested an idea to him.

'I have left down in my Seminary a poor young man who, if I be not mistaken, is going to be brutally persecuted. If he were only a simple monk he would be already in pace.

'At present this young man knows only Latin and the Holy Scriptures; but it is by no means impossible that one day he may display great talent, either for preaching or for the guidance of souls. I do not know what he will do; but he has the sacred fire, he may go far. I intended to give him to our

Bishop, should one ever be sent to us who had something of your way of looking at men and affairs.'

'What is your young man's origin?' said the Marquis.

'He is said to be the son of a carpenter in our mountains, but I am inclined to believe that he is the natural son of some rich man. I have seen him receive an anonymous or pseudonymous letter containing a bill of exchange for five hundred francs.'

'Ah! It is Julien Sorel,' said the Marquis.

'How do you know his name?' asked the astonished abbe; and, as he was blushing at his own question:

'That is what I am not going to tell you,' replied the Marquis.

'Very well!' the abbe went on, 'you might try making him your secretary, he has energy, and judgment; in short, it is an experiment worth trying.'

'Why not?' said the Marquis; 'but would he be the sort of man to let his palm be greased by the Prefect of Police or by anyone else, to play the spy on me? That is my only objection.'

Receiving favourable assurances from the abbe Pirard, the Marquis produced a note for one thousand francs:

'Send this to Julien Sorel for his journey; tell him to come to me.'

'One can see,' said the abbe Pirard, 'that you live in Paris! You are unaware of the tyranny that weighs upon us poor provincials, and especially upon priests who are not on good terms with the Jesuits. They will never allow Julien Sorel to leave, they will manage to cover themselves with the cleverest excuses, they will reply that he is ill, letters will have gone astray in the post,' etc., etc.

'One of these days I shall procure a letter from the Minister to the Bishop,' said the Marquis.

‘I was forgetting one thing,’ said the abbe: ‘this young man, although of quite humble birth, has a proud heart, he will be of no use to you if his pride is offended; you will only make him stupid.’

‘I like that,’ said the Marquis, ‘I shall make him my son’s companion, will that do?’

Some time after this, Julien received a letter in an unknown hand and bearing the postmark of Chalons, and found a draft upon a merchant in Besancon and instructions to proceed to Paris without delay. The letter was signed with an assumed name, but as he opened it Julien trembled: a leaf from a tree had fallen out at his feet; it was the signal arranged between him and the abbe Pirard.

Within an hour, Julien was summoned to the Bishop’s Palace, where he found himself greeted with a wholly fatherly welcome. Interspersed with quotations from Horace, Monseigneur paid him, with regard to the exalted destiny that awaited him in Paris, a number of very neat compliments, which required an explanation if he were to express his thanks. Julien could say nothing, chiefly because he knew nothing, and Monseigneur showed a high regard for him. One of the minor clergy of the Palace wrote to the Mayor who made haste to appear in person bringing a passport already signed, but with a blank space for the name of the traveller.

Before midnight, Julien was with Fouque, whose sober mind was more astonished than delighted by the future which seemed to be in store for his friend.

‘The end of it will be,’ said this Liberal elector, ‘a post under Government, which will oblige you to take some action that will be pilloried in the newspapers. It will be through your disgrace that I shall have news of you. Remember that, even financially speaking, it is better to earn one hundred louis in an honest trade in timber, where you are your own master, than to receive four thousand francs from a Government, were it that of King Solomon himself.’

Julien saw no more in this than the pettiness of a rustic mind. He was at last going to appear on the stage of great events. The good fortune of going to

Paris, which he peopled in his imagination with men of intelligence, great intriguers, great hypocrites, but as courteous as the Bishop of Besancon and the Bishop of Agde, eclipsed everything else in his eyes. He represented himself to his friend as deprived of his free will by the abbe Pirard's letter.

Towards noon on the following day he arrived in Verrieres the happiest of men, he reckoned upon seeing Madame de Renal again. He went first of all to his original protector, the good abbe Chelan. He met with a stern reception.

'Do you consider that you are under any obligation to me?' said M. Chelan, without acknowledging his greeting. 'You will take luncheon with me, meanwhile another horse will be hired for you, and you will leave Verrieres, without seeing anyone.'

'To hear is to obey,' replied Julien, with the prim face of a seminarist; and there was no further discussion save of theology and Latin scholarship.

He mounted his horse, rode a league, after which, coming upon a wood, with no one to see him enter it, he hid himself there. At sunset he sent the horse back. Later on, he entered the house of a peasant, who agreed to sell him a ladder, and to go with him, carrying the ladder, to the little wood that overhung the Cours de la Fidelite, in Verrieres.

'We are a poor conscript deserting — or a smuggler,' said the peasant, as he took leave of him, 'but what do I care? My ladder is well paid for, and I myself have had to pass some awkward moments in my life.'

The night was very dark. About one o'clock in the morning, Julien, carrying his ladder, made his way into Verrieres. He climbed down as soon as he could into the bed of the torrent, which ran through M. de Renal's magnificent gardens at a depth of ten feet, and confined between walls. Julien climbed up easily by his ladder. 'What sort of greeting will the watch-dogs give me?' he wondered. 'That is the whole question.' The dogs barked, and rushed towards him; but he whistled softly, and they came and fawned upon him.

Then climbing from terrace to terrace, although all the gates were shut, he had no difficulty in arriving immediately beneath the window of Madame de Renal's bedroom, which, on the garden side, was no more than nine or ten feet above the ground.

There was in the shutters a small opening in the shape of a heart, which Julien knew well. To his great dismay, this little opening was not lighted by the glimmer of a nightlight within.

'Great God!' he said to himself; 'tonight, of all nights, this room is not occupied by Madame de Renal! Where can she be sleeping? The family are at Verrieres, since I found the dogs here; but I may in this room, without a light, come upon M. de Renal himself or a stranger, and then what a scandal!'

The most prudent course was to retire; but the idea filled Julien with horror. 'If it is a stranger, I shall make off as fast as my legs will carry me, leaving my ladder behind; but if it is she, what sort of welcome awaits me? She is steeped in repentance and the most extreme piety, I may be sure of that; but after all, she has still some memory of me, since she has just written to me.' With this argument he made up his mind.

His heart trembling, but determined nevertheless to see her or to perish, he flung a handful of gravel against the shutter; no reply. He placed his ladder against the wall by the side of the window and tapped himself on the shutter, softly at first then more loudly. 'Dark as it is, they may fire a gun at me,' thought Julien. This thought reduced his mad undertaking to a question of physical courage.

'This room is unoccupied tonight,' he thought, 'or else whoever it is that is sleeping here is awake by this time. So there is no need for any further precaution here; all I need think of is not making myself heard by the people who are sleeping in the other rooms.'

He stepped down, placed his ladder against one of the shutters, climbed up again and passing his hand through the heart-shaped opening, was fortunate in finding almost at once the wire fastened to the latch that closed the shutter. He pulled this wire; it was with an unspeakable joy that he felt that

the shutter was no longer closed and was yielding to his efforts. ‘I must open it little by little and let her recognise my voice.’ He opened the shutter sufficiently to pass his head through the gap, repeating in a whisper: ‘It is a friend.’

He made certain, by applying his ear, that nothing broke the profound silence in the room. But decidedly, there was no nightlight, even half extinguished, on the hearth; this was indeed a bad sign.

‘Beware of a gunshot!’ He thought for a moment; then, with one finger, ventured to tap the pane: no response; he tapped more loudly. ‘Even if I break the glass, I must settle this business.’ As he was knocking hard, he thought he could just make out, in the pitch darkness, something like a white phantom coming across the room. In a moment, there was no doubt about it, he did see a phantom which seemed to be advancing with extreme slowness. Suddenly he saw a cheek pressed to the pane to which his eye was applied.

He shuddered, and recoiled slightly. But the night was so dark that, even at this close range, he could not make out whether it was Madame de Renal. He feared an instinctive cry of alarm; he could hear the dogs prowling with muttered growls round the foot of his ladder. ‘It is I,’ he repeated, quite loudly, ‘a friend.’ No answer; the white phantom had vanished. ‘For pity’s sake, open the window. I must speak to you, I am too wretched!’ and he knocked until the window nearly broke.

A little sharp sound was heard; the catch of the window gave way; he pushed it open and sprang lightly into the room.

The white phantom moved away; he seized it by the arms; it was a woman. All his ideas of courage melted. ‘If it is she, what will she say to me?’ What was his state when he realised from a faint cry that it was Madame de Renal.

He gathered her in his arms; she trembled, and had barely the strength to repulse him.

‘Wretch! What are you doing?’

Scarcely could her tremulous voice articulate the words. Julien saw that she was genuinely angry.

‘I have come to see you after fourteen months of a cruel parting.’

‘Go, leave me this instant. Ah! M. Chelan, why did you forbid me to write to him? I should have prevented this horror.’ She thrust him from her with a force that was indeed extraordinary. ‘I repent of my crime; heaven has deigned to enlighten me,’ she repeated in a stifled voice. ‘Go! Fly!’

‘After fourteen months of misery, I shall certainly not leave you until I have spoken to you. I wish to know all that you have been doing. Ah! I have loved you well enough to deserve this confidence . . . I wish to know all.’

In spite of herself Madame de Renal felt this tone of authority exert its influence over her heart.

Julien, who was holding her in a passionate embrace, and resisting her efforts to liberate herself, ceased to press her in his arms. This relaxation helped to reassure Madame de Renal.

‘I am going to draw up the ladder,’ he said, ‘so that it may not compromise us if one of the servants, awakened by the noise, goes the rounds.’

‘Ah! Leave me, leave me rather,’ the answer came with unfeigned anger. ‘What do men matter to me? It is God that sees the terrible wrong you are doing me, and will punish me for it. You are taking a cowardly advantage of the regard that I once felt for you, but no longer feel. Do you hear, Master Julien?’

He drew up the ladder very slowly, so as not to make any noise.

‘Is your husband in town?’ he asked, not to defy her, but from force of habit.

‘Do not speak to me so, for pity’s sake, or I shall call my husband. I am all too guilty already of not having sent you away, at any cost. I pity you,’ she told him, seeking to wound his pride which she knew to be so irritable.

Her refusal to use the tu form, that abrupt method of breaking so tender a bond, and one upon which he still reckoned, roused Julien’s amorous transport to a frenzy.

‘What! Is it possible that you no longer love me!’ he said to her, in those accents of the heart to which it is so difficult to listen unmoved.

She made no reply; as for him, he was weeping bitter tears.

Really, he had no longer the strength to speak.

‘And so I am completely forgotten by the one person who has ever loved me! What use to live any longer?’ All his courage had left him as soon as he no longer had to fear the danger of encountering a man; everything had vanished from his heart, save love.

He wept for a long time in silence. He took her hand, she tried to withdraw it; and yet, after a few almost convulsive movements, she let him keep it. The darkness was intense; they found themselves both seated upon Madame de Renal’s bed.

‘What a difference from the state of things fourteen months ago!’ thought Julien, and his flow of tears increased. ‘So absence unfailingly destroys all human feelings!

‘Be so kind as to tell me what has happened to you,’ Julien said at length, embarrassed by his silence and in a voice almost stifled by tears.

‘There can be no doubt,’ replied Madame de Renal in a harsh voice, the tone of which offered a cutting reproach to Julien, ‘my misdeeds were known in the town, at the time of your departure. You were so imprudent in your behaviour. Some time later, when I was in despair, the respectable M. Chelan came to see me. It was in vain that, for a long time, he sought to obtain a confession. One day, the idea occurred to him to take me into that church at Dijon in which I made my first Communion. There, he ventured to broach the subject . . . ‘ Madame de Renal’s speech was interrupted by her tears. ‘What a shameful moment! I confessed all. That worthy man was kind enough not to heap on me the weight of his indignation: he shared my distress. At that time I was writing you day after day letters which I dared not send you; I concealed them carefully, and when I was too wretched used to shut myself up in my room and read over my own letters.

‘At length, M. Chelan persuaded me to hand them over to him . . . Some of them, written with a little more prudence than the rest, had been sent to you; never once did you answer me.’

‘Never, I swear to you, did I receive any letter from you at the Seminary.’

‘Great God! who can have intercepted them?’

‘Imagine my grief; until the day when I saw you in the Cathedral, I did not know whether you were still alive.’

‘God in His mercy made me understand how greatly I was sinning against Him, against my children, against my husband,’ replied Madame de Renal. ‘He has never loved me as I believed then that you loved me . . .’

Julien flung himself into her arms, without any definite intention but with entire lack of self-control. But Madame de Renal thrust him from her, and continued quite firmly:

‘My respectable friend M. Chelan made me realise that, in marrying M. de Renal, I had pledged all my affections to him, even those of which I was still ignorant, which I had never felt before a certain fatal intimacy . . . Since the great sacrifice of those letters, which were so precious to me, my life has flowed on, if not happily, at any rate quietly enough. Do not disturb it any more; be a friend to me . . . the best of friends.’ Julien covered her hands with kisses; she could feel that he was still crying. ‘Do not cry, you distress me so . . . Tell me, it is your turn now, all that you have been doing.’ Julien was unable to speak. ‘I wish to know what sort of life you led at the Seminary,’ she repeated, ‘then you shall go.’

Without a thought of what he was telling her, Julien spoke of the endless intrigues and jealousies which he had encountered at first, then of his more peaceful life after he was appointed tutor.

‘It was then,’ he added, ‘that after a long silence, which was doubtless intended to make me understand what I see only too clearly now, that you no longer love me, and that I had become as nothing to you . . .’

Madame de Renal gripped his hands. ‘It was then that you sent me a sum of five hundred francs.’

‘Never,’ said Madame de Renal.

‘It was a letter postmarked Paris and signed Paul Sorel, to avoid all suspicion.’

A short discussion followed as to the possible source of this letter. The atmosphere began to change. Unconsciously, Madame de Renal and Julien had departed from their solemn tone; they had returned to that of a tender intimacy. They could not see each other, so intense was the darkness, but the sound of their voices told all. Julien slipped his arm round the waist of his mistress; this movement was highly dangerous. She tried to remove Julien’s arm, whereupon he, with a certain adroitness, distracted her attention by an interesting point in his narrative.

The arm was then forgotten, and remained in the position that it had occupied.

After abundant conjectures as to the source of the letter with the five hundred francs, Julien had resumed his narrative; he became rather more his own master in speaking of his past life which, in comparison with what was happening to him at that moment, interested him so little. His attention was wholly concentrated on the manner in which his visit was to end. ‘You must leave me,’ she kept on telling him, in a curt tone.

‘What a disgrace for me if I am shown the door! The remorse will be enough to poison my whole life,’ he said to himself, ‘she will never write to me. God knows when I shall return to this place!’ From that moment, all the element of heavenly bliss in Julien’s situation vanished rapidly from his heart. Seated by the side of a woman whom he adored, clasping her almost in his arms, in this room in which he had been so happy, plunged in a black darkness, perfectly well aware that for the last minute she had been crying, feeling, from the movement of her bosom, that she was convulsed with sobs, he unfortunately became a frigid politician, almost as calculating and as frigid as when, in the courtyard of the Seminary, he saw himself made the butt of some malicious joke by one of his companions stronger than himself. Julien

spun out his story, and spoke of the wretched life he had led since leaving Verrieres. ‘And so,’ Madame de Renal said to herself, ‘after a year’s absence, almost without a single token of remembrance, while I was forgetting him, his mind was entirely taken up with the happy days he had enjoyed at Vergy.’ Her sobs increased in violence. Julien saw that his story had been successful. He realised that he must now try his last weapon: he came abruptly to the letter that he had just received from Paris.

‘I have taken leave of Monseigneur, the Bishop.’

‘What! You are not returning to Besancon! You are leaving us for ever?’

‘Yes,’ replied Julien, in a resolute tone; ‘yes, I am abandoning the place where I am forgotten even by her whom I have most dearly loved in all my life, and I am leaving it never to set eyes on it again. I am going to Paris . . .’

‘You are going to Paris!’ Madame de Renal exclaimed quite aloud.

Her voice was almost stifled by her tears, and showed the intensity of her grief. Julien had need of this encouragement; he was going to attempt a course which might decide everything against him; and before this exclamation, seeing no light, he was absolutely ignorant of the effect that he was producing. He hesitated no longer; the fear of remorse gave him complete command of himself; he added coldly as he rose to his feet:

‘Yes, Madame, I leave you for ever, may you be happy; farewell.’

He took a few steps towards the window; he was already opening it. Madame de Renal sprang after him and flung herself into his arms.

Thus, after three hours of conversation, Julien obtained what he had so passionately desired during the first two. Had they come a little earlier, this return to tender sentiments, the eclipse of remorse in Madame de Renal would have been a divine happiness; obtained thus by artifice, they were no more than mere pleasure. Julien positively insisted, against the entreaties of his mistress, upon lighting the nightlight.

‘Do you then wish me,’ he asked her, ‘to retain no memory of having seen you? The love that is doubtless glowing in those charming eyes, shall it then

be lost to me? Shall the whiteness of that lovely hand be invisible to me? Think that I am leaving you for a very long time perhaps!'

Madame de Renal could refuse nothing in the face of this idea which made her dissolve in tears. Dawn was beginning to paint in clear hues the outline of the fir trees on the mountain to the least of Verrieres. Instead of going away, Julien, intoxicated with pleasure, asked Madame de Renal to let him spend the whole day hidden in her room, and not to leave until the following night.

'And why not?' was her answer. 'This fatal relapse destroys all my self-esteem, and dooms me to lifelong misery,' and she pressed him to her heart. 'My husband is no longer the same, he has suspicions; he believes that I have been fooling him throughout this affair, and is in the worst of tempers with me. If he hears the least sound I am lost, he will drive me from the house like the wretch that I am.'

'Ah! There I can hear the voice of M. Chelan,' said Julien; you would not have spoken to me like that before my cruel departure for the Seminary; you loved me then!'

Julien was rewarded for the coolness with which he had uttered this speech; he saw his mistress at once forget the danger in which the proximity of her husband involved her, to think of the far greater danger of seeing Julien doubtful of her love for him. The daylight was rapidly increasing and now flooded the room; Julien recovered all the exquisite sensations of pride when he was once more able to see in his arms and almost at his feet this charming woman, the only woman that he had ever loved, who, a few hours earlier, had been entirely wrapped up in the fear of a terrible God and in devotion to duty. Resolutions fortified by a year of constancy had not been able to hold out against his boldness.

Presently they heard a sound in the house; a consideration to which she had not given a thought now disturbed Madame de Renal.

'That wicked Elisa will be coming into the room, what are we to do with that enormous ladder?' she said to her lover; 'where are we to hide it? I am going to take it up to the loft,' she suddenly exclaimed, with a sort of playfulness.

‘But you will have to go through the servant’s room,’ said Julien with astonishment.

‘I shall leave the ladder in the corridor, call the man and send him on an errand.’

‘Remember to have some excuse ready in case the man notices the ladder when he passes it in the passage.’

‘Yes, my angel,’ said Madame de Renal as she gave him a kiss. ‘And you, remember to hide yourself quickly under the bed if Elisa comes into the room while I am away.’

Julien was amazed at this sudden gaiety. ‘And so,’ he thought, ‘the approach of physical danger, so far from disturbing her, restores her gaiety because she forgets her remorse! Indeed a superior woman! Ah! There is a heart in which it is glorious to reign!’ Julien was in ecstasies.

Madame de Renal took the ladder; plainly it was too heavy for her. Julien went to her assistance; he was admiring that elegant figure, which suggested anything rather than strength, when suddenly, without help, she grasped the ladder and picked it up as she might have picked up a chair. She carried it swiftly to the corridor on the third storey, where she laid it down by the wall. She called the manservant, and, to give him time to put on his clothes, went up to the dovecote. Five minutes later, when she returned to the corridor, the ladder was no more to be seen. What had become of it? Had Julien been out of the house, the danger would have been nothing. But, at that moment, if her husband saw the ladder! The consequences might be appalling. Madame de Renal ran up and down the house. At last she discovered the ladder under the roof, where the man had taken it and in fact hidden it himself. This in itself was strange, and at another time would have alarmed her.

‘What does it matter to me,’ she thought, ‘what may happen in twenty-four hours from now, when Julien will have gone? Will not everything then be to me horror and remorse?’

She had a sort of vague idea that she ought to take her life, but what did that matter? After a parting which she had supposed to be for ever, he was

restored to her, she saw him again, and what he had done in making his way to her gave proof of such a wealth of love!

In telling Julien of the incident of the ladder:

‘What shall I say to my husband,’ she asked him, ‘if the man tells him how he found the ladder?’ She meditated for a moment. ‘It will take them twenty-four hours to discover the peasant who sold it to you’; and flinging herself into Julien’s arms and clasping him in a convulsive embrace: ‘Ah! to die, to die like this!’ she cried as she covered him with kisses; ‘but I must not let you die of hunger,’ she added with a laugh.

‘Come; first of all, I am going to hide you in Madame Derville’s room, which is always kept locked.’ She kept watch at the end of the corridor and Julien slipped from door to door. ‘Remember not to answer, if anyone knocks,’ she reminded him as she turned the key outside; ‘anyhow, it would only be the children playing.’

‘Make them go into the garden, below the window,’ said Julien, ‘so that I may have the pleasure of seeing them, make them speak.’

‘Yes, yes,’ cried Madame de Renal as she left him.

She returned presently with oranges, biscuits, a bottle of Malaga; she had found it impossible to purloin any bread.

‘What is your husband doing?’ said Julien.

‘He is writing down notes of the deals he proposes to do with some peasants.’

But eight o’clock had struck, the house was full of noise. If Madame de Renal were not to be seen, people would begin searching everywhere for her; she was obliged to leave him. Presently she returned, in defiance of all the rules of prudence, to bring him a cup of coffee; she was afraid of his dying of hunger. After luncheon she managed to shepherd the children underneath the window of Madame Derville’s room. He found that they had grown considerably, but they had acquired a common air, or else his ideas had changed. Madame de Renal spoke to them of Julien. The eldest replied

with affection and regret for his former tutor, but it appeared that the two younger had almost forgotten him.

M. de Renal did not leave the house that morning; he was incessantly going up and downstairs, engaged in striking bargains with certain peasants, to whom he was selling his potato crop. Until dinner time, Madame de Renal had not a moment to spare for her prisoner. When dinner was on the table, it occurred to her to steal a plateful of hot soup for him. As she silently approached the door of the room in which he was, carrying the plate carefully, she found herself face to face with the servant who had hidden the ladder that morning. At that moment, he too was coming silently along the corridor, as though listening. Probably Julien had forgotten to tread softly. The servant made off in some confusion. Madame de Renal went boldly into Julien's room; her account of the incident made him shudder.

'You are afraid'; she said to him; 'and I, I would brave all the dangers in the world without a tremor. I fear one thing only, that is the moment when I shall be left alone after you have gone,' and she ran from the room.

'Ah!' thought Julien, greatly excited, 'remorse is the only danger that sublime soul dreads!'

Night came at last. M. de Renal went to the Casino.

His wife had announced a severe headache, she retired to her room, made haste to dismiss Elisa, and speedily rose from her bed to open the door to Julien.

It so happened that he really was faint with hunger. Madame de Renal went to the pantry to look for bread. Julien heard a loud cry. She returned and told him that on entering the dark pantry, making her way to a cupboard in which the bread was kept, and stretching out her hand, she had touched a woman's arm. It was Elisa who had uttered the cry which Julien had heard.

'What was she doing there?'

'She was stealing a few sweetmeats, or possibly spying on us,' said Madame de Renal with complete indifference. 'But fortunately I have found a pate and a big loaf.'

‘And what have you got there?’ said Julien, pointing to the pockets of her apron.

Madame de Renal had forgotten that, ever since dinner, they had been filled with bread.

Julien clasped her in his arms with the keenest passion; never had she seemed to him so beautiful. ‘Even in Paris,’ he told himself vaguely, ‘I shall not be able to find a nobler character.’ She had all the awkwardness of a woman little accustomed to attentions of this sort, and at the same time the true courage of a person who fears only dangers of another kind and far more terrible.

While Julien was devouring his supper with a keen appetite, and his mistress was playfully apologising for the simplicity of the repast, for she had a horror of serious speech, the door of the room was all at once shaken violently. It was M. de Renal.

‘Why have you locked yourself in?’ he shouted to her.

Julien had just time to slip beneath the sofa.

‘What! You are fully dressed,’ said M. de Renal, as he entered; ‘you are having supper, and you have locked your door?’

On any ordinary day, this question, put with all the brutality of a husband, would have troubled Madame de Renal, but she felt that her husband had only to lower his eyes a little to catch sight of Julien; for M. de Renal had flung himself upon the chair on which Julien had been sitting a moment earlier, facing the sofa.

Her headache served as an excuse for everything. While in his turn her husband was giving her a long and detailed account of the pool he had won in the billiard room of the Casino, ‘a pool of nineteen francs, begad!’ he added, she saw lying on a chair before their eyes, and within a few feet of them, Julien’s hat. Cooler than ever, she began to undress, and, choosing her moment, passed swiftly behind her husband and flung a garment over the chair with the hat on it.

At length M. de Renal left her. She begged Julien to begin over again the story of his life in the Seminary: ‘Yesterday I was not listening to you, I was thinking, while you were speaking, only of how I was to bring myself to send you away.’

She was the embodiment of imprudence. They spoke very loud; and it might have been two o’clock in the morning when they were interrupted by a violent blow on the door. It was M. de Renal again:

‘Let me in at once, there are burglars in the house!’ he said, ‘Saint–Jean found their ladder this morning.’

‘This is the end of everything,’ cried Madame de Renal, throwing herself into Julien’s arms. ‘He is going to kill us both, he does not believe in the burglars; I am going to die in your arms, more fortunate in my death than I have been in my life.’ She made no answer to her husband, who was waiting angrily outside, she was holding Julien in a passionate embrace.

‘Save Stanislas’s mother,’ he said to her with an air of command. ‘I am going to jump down into the courtyard from the window of the closet, and escape through the garden, the dogs know me. Make a bundle of my clothes and throw it down into the garden as soon as you can. Meanwhile, let him break the door in. And whatever you do, no confession, I forbid it, suspicion is better than certainty.’

‘You will kill yourself, jumping down,’ was her sole reply and her sole anxiety.

She went with him to the window of the closet; she then took such time as she required to conceal his garments. Finally she opened the door to her husband, who was boiling with rage. He searched the bedroom, the closet, without uttering a word, and then vanished. Julien’s clothes were thrown down to him, he caught them and ran quickly down the garden towards the Doubs.

As he ran, he heard a bullet whistle past him, and simultaneously the sound of a gun being fired.

‘That is not M. de Renal,’ he decided, ‘he is not a good enough shot.’ The dogs were running by his side in silence, a second shot apparently shattered the paw of one dog, for it began to emit lamentable howls. Julien jumped the wall of a terrace, proceeded fifty yards under cover, then continued his flight in a different direction. He heard voices calling, and could distinctly see the servant, his enemy, fire a gun; a farmer also came and shot at him from the other side of the garden, but by this time Julien had reached the bank of the Doubs, where he put on his clothes.

An hour later, he was a league from Verrieres, on the road to Geneva. ‘If there is any suspicion,’ thought Julien, ‘it is on the Paris road that they will look for me.’

BOOK TWO

She is not pretty, she is not wearing rouge.

SAINT-BEUVE

Chapter 1

Country Pleasures

O rus, quando ego te aspiciam!

VIRGIL†

† HORACE in earlier edition]

‘The gentleman is waiting, surely, for the mail-coach for Paris?’ he was asked by the landlord of an inn at which he stopped to break his fast.

‘Today or tomorrow, it is all the same to me,’ said Julien.

The coach arrived while he was feigning indifference. There were two places vacant.

‘What! It is you, my poor Falcoz,’ said the traveller, who had come from the direction of Geneva to him who now entered the coach with Julien.

‘I thought you had settled in the neighbourhood of Lyons,’ said Falcoz, ‘in a charming valley by the Rhone.’

‘Settled, indeed! I am running away.’

‘What! Running away? You, Saint–Giraud! With that honest face of yours, have you committed a crime?’ said Falcoz, with a laugh.

‘Upon my soul, not far off it. I am running away from the abominable life one leads in the country. I love the shade of the woods and the quiet of the fields, as you know; you have often accused me of being romantic. The one

thing I never wished to hear mentioned was politics, and politics pursue me everywhere.'

'But to what party do you belong?'

'To none, and that is what has been fatal to me. These are all my politics: I enjoy music, and painting; a good book is an event in my life; I shall soon be four and forty. How many years have I to live? Fifteen, twenty, thirty, perhaps, at the most. Very well; I hold that in thirty years from now, our Ministers will be a little more able, but otherwise just as good fellows as we have today. The history of England serves as a mirror to show me our future. There will always be a King who seeks to extend his prerogative; the ambition to enter Parliament, the glory and the hundreds of thousands of francs amassed by Mirabeau will always keep our wealthy provincials awake at night: they will call that being Liberal and loving the people. The desire to become a Peer or a Gentleman in Waiting will always possess the Ultras. On board the Ship of State, everyone will wish to be at the helm, for the post is well paid. Will there never be a little corner anywhere for the mere passenger?'

'Why, of course, and a very pleasant one, too, for a man of your peaceful nature. Is it the last election that is driving you from your district?'

'My trouble dates from farther back. I was, four years ago, forty years old, and had five hundred thousand francs, I am four years older now, and have probably fifty thousand less, which I shall lose by the sale of my place, Monfleury, by the Rhone, a superb position.

'In Paris, I was tired of that perpetual play-acting, to which one is driven by what you call nineteenth-century civilisation. I felt a longing for human fellowship and simplicity. I bought a piece of land in the mountains by the Rhone, the most beautiful spot in the world.

'The vicar of the village and the neighbouring squires made much of me for the first six months; I had them to dine; I had left Paris, I told them, so as never to mention or to hear of politics again. You see, I subscribe to no newspaper. The fewer letters the postman brings me, the happier I am.

‘This was not what the vicar wanted; presently I was besieged with endless indiscreet requests, intrigues, and so forth. I wished to give two or three hundred francs every year to the poor, they pestered me for them on behalf of pious associations; Saint Joseph, Our Lady, and so forth. I refused: then I came in for endless insults. I was foolish enough to show annoyance. I could no longer leave the house in the morning to go and enjoy the beauty of our mountain scenery, without meeting some bore who would interrupt my thoughts with an unpleasant reminder of my fellow men and their evil ways. In the Rogationtide processions, for instance, the chanting in which I like (it is probably a Greek melody), they no longer bless my fields, because, the vicar says, they belong to an unbeliever. A pious old peasant woman’s cow dies, she says that it is because there is a pond close by which belongs to me, the unbeliever, a philosopher from Paris, and a week later I find all my fish floating on the water, poisoned with lime. I am surrounded by trickery in every form. The justice of the peace, an honest man, but afraid of losing his place, always decides against me. The peace of the fields is hell to me. As soon as they saw me abandoned by the vicar, head of the village Congregation, and not supported by the retired captain, head of the Liberals, they all fell upon me, even the mason who had been living upon me for a year, even the wheelwright, who tried to get away with cheating me when he mended my ploughs.

‘In order to have some footing and to win a few at least of my lawsuits, I turned Liberal; but, as you were saying, those damned elections came, they asked me for my vote . . .’

‘For a stranger?’

‘Not a bit of it, for a man I know only too well. I refused, a fearful imprudence! From that moment, I had the Liberals on top of me as well, my position became intolerable. I believe that if it had ever entered the vicar’s head to accuse me of having murdered my servant, there would have been a score of witnesses from both parties, ready to swear that they had seen me commit the crime.’

‘You wish to live in the country without ministering to your neighbours’ passions, without even listening to their gossip. What a mistake!’

‘I have made amends for it now. Monfleury is for sale. I shall lose fifty thousand francs, if I must, but I am overjoyed, I am leaving that hell of hypocrisy and malice. I am going to seek solitude and rustic peace in the one place in France where they exist, in a fourth-floor apartment, overlooking the Champs–Elysees. And yet I am just thinking whether I shall not begin my political career, in the Roule quarter, by presenting the blessed bread in the parish church.’

‘None of that would have happened to you under Bonaparte,’ said Falcoz, his eyes shining with anger and regret.

‘That’s all very well, but why couldn’t he keep going, your Bonaparte? Everything that I suffer from today is his doing.’

Here Julien began to listen with increased attention. He had realised from the first that the Bonapartist Falcoz was the early playmate of M. de Renal, repudiated by him in 1816, while the philosopher Saint–Giraud must be a brother of that chief clerk in the Prefecture of —— , who knew how to have municipal property knocked down to him on easy terms.

‘And all that has been your Bonaparte’s doing,’ Saint–Giraud continued: ‘An honest man, harmless if ever there was one, forty years old and with five hundred thousand francs, can’t settle down in the country and find peace there. Bonaparte’s priests and nobles drive him out again.’

‘Ah! You must not speak evil of him,’ cried Falcoz, ‘never has France stood so high in the esteem of foreign nations as during the thirteen years of his reign. In those days, everything that was done had greatness in it.’

‘Your Emperor, may the devil fly away with him,’ went on the man of four and forty, ‘was great only upon his battlefields, and when he restored our financial balance in 1801. What was the meaning of all his conduct after that? With his chamberlains and his pomp and his receptions at the Tuileries, he simply furnished a new edition of all the stuff and nonsense of the monarchy. It was a corrected edition, it might have served for a century or two. The nobles and priests preferred to return to the old edition, but they have not the iron hand that they need to bring it before the public.’

‘Listen to the old printer talking!’

‘Who is it that is turning me off my land?’ went on the printer with heat. ‘The priests, whom Napoleon brought back with his Concordat, instead of treating them as the State treats doctors, lawyers, astronomers, of regarding them merely as citizens, without inquiring into the trade by which they earn their living. Would there be these insolent gentlemen today if your Bonaparte had not created barons and counts? No, the fashion had passed. Next to the priests, it is the minor country nobles that have annoyed me most, and forced me to turn Liberal.’

The discussion was endless, this theme will occupy the minds and tongues of France for the next half-century. As Saint–Giraud kept on repeating that it was impossible to live in the provinces, Julien timidly cited the example of M. de Renal.

‘Egad, young man, you’re a good one!’ cried Falcoz, ‘he has turned himself into a hammer so as not to be made the anvil, and a terrible hammer at that. But I can see him cut out by Valenod. Do you know that rascal? He’s the real article. What will your M. de Renal say when he finds himself turned out of office one of these fine days, and Valenod filling his place?’

‘He will be left to meditate on his crimes,’ said Saint–Giraud. ‘So you know Verrieres, young man, do you? Very good! Bonaparte, whom heaven confound, made possible the reign of the Renals and Chelans, which has paved the way for the reign of the Valenods and Maslons.’

This talk of shady politics astonished Julien, and took his thoughts from his dreams of sensual bliss.

He was little impressed by the first view of Paris seen in the distance. His fantastic imaginings of the future in store for him had to do battle with the still vivid memory of the twenty-four hours which he had just spent at Verrieres. He made a vow that he would never abandon his mistress’s children, but would give up everything to protect them, should the impertinences of the priests give us a Republic and lead to persecutions of the nobility.

What would have happened to him on the night of his arrival at Verrieres if, at the moment when he placed his ladder against Madame de Renal's bedroom window, he had found that room occupied by a stranger, or by M. de Renal?

But also what bliss in those first few hours, when his mistress really wished to send him away, and he pleaded his cause, seated by her side in the darkness! A mind like Julien's is pursued by such memories for a lifetime. The rest of their meeting had already merged into the first phases of their love, fourteen months earlier.

Julien was awakened from his profound abstraction by the stopping of the carriage. They had driven into the courtyard of the posthouse in the rue Jean–Jacques Rousseau. 'I wish to go to La Malmaison,' he told the driver of a passing cabriolet. 'At this time of night, Sir? What to do?' 'What business is it of yours? Drive on.'

True passion thinks only of itself. That, it seems to me, is why the passions are so absurd in Paris, where one's neighbour always insists upon one's thinking largely of him. I shall not describe Julien's transports at La Malmaison. He wept. What! In spite of the ugly white walls set up this year, which divide the park in pieces? Yes, sir; for Julien, as for posterity, there was no distinction between Arcole, Saint Helena and La Malmaison.

That evening, Julien hesitated for long before entering the playhouse; he had strange ideas as to that sink of iniquity.

An intense distrust prevented him from admiring the Paris of today, he was moved only by the monuments bequeathed by his hero.

'So here I am in the centre of intrigue and hypocrisy! This is where the abbe de Frilair's protectors reign.'

On the evening of the third day, curiosity prevailed over his plan of seeing everything before calling upon the abbe Pirard.

The said abbe explained to him, in a frigid tone, the sort of life that awaited him at M. de La Mole's.

‘If after a few months you are of no use to him, you will return to the Seminary, but by the front door. You are going to lodge with the Marquis, one of the greatest noblemen in France. You will dress in black, but like a layman in mourning, not like a churchman. I require that, thrice weekly, you pursue your theological studies in a Seminary, where I shall introduce you. Each day, at noon, you will take your place in the library of the Marquis, who intends to employ you in writing letters with reference to lawsuits and other business. The Marquis notes down, in a word or two, upon the margin of each letter that he receives, the type of answer that it requires. I have undertaken that, by the end of three months, you will have learned to compose these answers to such effect that, of every twelve which you present to the Marquis for his signature, he will be able to sign eight or nine. In the evening, at eight o’clock, you will put his papers in order, and at ten you will be free.

‘It may happen,’ the abbe Pirard continued, ‘that some old lady or some man of persuasive speech will hint to you the prospect of immense advantages, or quite plainly offer you money to let him see the letters received by the Marquis . . .’

‘Oh, Sir!’ cried Julien, blushing.

‘It is strange,’ said the abbe with a bitter smile, ‘that, poor as you are, and after a year of Seminary, you still retain these virtuous indignations. You must indeed have been blind!

‘Can it be his blood coming out?’ murmured the abbe, as though putting the question to himself. ‘The strange thing is,’ he added, looking at Julien, ‘that the Marquis knows you . . . How, I cannot say. He is giving you, to begin with, a salary of one hundred louis. He is a man who acts only from caprice, that is his weakness; he will outdo you in puerilities. If he is pleased with you, your salary may rise in time to eight thousand francs.

‘But you must be well aware,’ the abbe went on in a harsh tone, ‘that he is not giving you all this money for your handsome face. You will have to be of use to him. If I were in your position, I should speak as little as possible, and above all, never speak of matters of which I know nothing.

‘Ah!’ said the abbe, ‘I have been making inquiries on your behalf; I was forgetting M. de La Mole’s family. He has two children, a daughter, and a son of nineteen, the last word in elegance, a mad fellow, who never knows at one minute what he will be doing the next. He has spirit, and courage; he has fought in Spain. The Marquis hopes, I cannot say why, that you will become friends with the young Comte Norbert. I have said that you are a great Latin scholar, perhaps he reckons upon your teaching his son a few ready-made phrases about Cicero and Virgil.

‘In your place, I should never allow this fine young man to make free with me; and, before yielding to his overtures, which will be perfectly civil, but slightly marred by irony, I should make him repeat them at least twice.

‘I shall not conceal from you that the young Comte de La Mole is bound to look down upon you at first, because of your humble birth. He is the direct descendant of a courtier, who had the honour to have his head cut off on the Place de Greve, on the 26th of April, 1574, for a political intrigue. As for you, you are the son of a carpenter at Verrieres, and moreover, you are in his father’s pay. Weigh these differences carefully, and study the history of this family in Moreri, all the flatterers who dine at their table make from time to time what they call delicate allusions to it.

‘Take care how you respond to the pleasantries of M. le Comte Norbert de La Mole, Squadron Commander of Hussars and a future Peer of France, and do not come and complain to me afterwards.’

‘It seems to me,’ said Julien, blushing deeply, ‘that I ought not even to answer a man who looks down upon me.’

‘You have no idea of this form of contempt; it will reveal itself only in exaggerated compliments. If you were a fool, you might let yourself be taken in by them; if you wished to succeed, you ought to let yourself be taken in.’

‘On the day when all this ceases to agree with me,’ said Julien, ‘shall I be considered ungrateful if I return to my little cell, number 103?’

‘No doubt,’ replied the abbe, ‘all the sycophants of the house will slander you, but then I shall appear. Adsum qui fed. I shall say that it was from me

that the decision came.'

Julien was dismayed by the bitter and almost malicious tone which he remarked in M. Pirard; this tone completely spoiled his last utterance.

The fact was that the abbe felt a scruple of conscience about loving Julien, and it was with a sort of religious terror that he was thus directly interfering with the destiny of another man.

'You will also see,' he continued, with the same ill grace, and as though in the performance of a painful duty, 'you will see Madame la Marquise de La Mole. She is a tall, fair woman, pious, proud, perfectly civil and even more insignificant. She is a daughter of the old Due de Chaulnes, so famous for his aristocratic prejudices. This great lady is a sort of compendium, in high relief, of all that makes up the character of the women of her rank. She makes it no secret that to have had ancestors who went to the Crusades is the sole advantage to which she attaches any importance. Money comes only a long way after: does that surprise you? We are no longer in the country, my friend.

'You will find in her drawing-room many great noblemen speaking of our Princes in a tone of singular disrespect. As for Madame de La Mole, she lowers her voice in respect whenever she names a Prince, let alone a Princess. I should not advise you to say in her hearing that Philip II or Henry VIII was a monster. They were KINGS, and that gives them an inalienable right to the respect of everyone, and above all to the respect of creatures without birth, like you and me. However,' M. Pirard added, 'we are priests, for she will take you for one; on that footing, she regards us as lackeys necessary to her salvation.'

'Sir,' said Julien, 'it seems to me that I shall not remain long in Paris.'

'As you please; but observe that there is no hope of success, for a man of our cloth, except through the great nobles. With that indefinable element (at least, I cannot define it), which there is in your character, if you do not succeed you will be persecuted; there is no middle way for you. Do not abuse your position. People see that you are not pleased when they speak to

you; in a social environment like this, you are doomed to misfortune, if you do not succeed in winning respect.

‘What would have become of you at Besancon, but for this caprice on the part of the Marquis de La Mole? One day, you will appreciate all the singularity of what he is doing for you, and, if you are not a monster, you will feel eternal gratitude to him and his family. How many poor abbes, cleverer men than you, have lived for years in Paris, upon the fifteen sous for their mass and the ten sous for their lectures in the Sorbonne! . . . Remember what I told you, last winter, of the early years of that wretch, Cardinal Dubois. Are you, by any chance, so proud as to imagine that you have more talent than he?

‘I, for example, a peaceable and insignificant man, expected to end my days in my Seminary; I was childish enough to have grown attached to it. Very well! I was going to be turned out when I offered my resignation. Do you know what was the extent of my fortune? I had five hundred and twenty francs of capital, neither more nor less; not a friend, at most two or three acquaintances. M. de La Mole, whom I had never seen, saved me from disaster; he had only to say the word, and I was given a living in which all my parishioners are people in easy circumstances, above the common vices, and the stipend fills me with shame, so far out of proportion is it to my work. I have spoken to you at this length only to put a little ballast into that head of yours.

‘One word more; it is my misfortune to have a hasty temper; it is possible that you and I may cease to speak to one another.

‘If the arrogance of the Marquise, or the mischievous pranks of her son, make the house definitely insupportable to you, I advise you to finish your studies in some Seminary thirty leagues from Paris, and in the North, rather than in the South. You will find in the North more civilisation and fewer injustices; and,’ he added, lowering his voice, ‘I must admit it, the proximity of the Parisian newspapers makes the petty tyrants afraid.

‘If we continue to find pleasure in each other’s company, and the Marquis’s household does not agree with you, I offer you a place as my vicar, and shall divide the revenues of this living with you equally. I owe you this and more,’

he added, cutting short Julien's expressions of gratitude, 'for the singular offer which you made me at Besancon. If, instead of five hundred and twenty francs, I had had nothing, you would have saved me.'

The cruel tone had gone from the abbe's voice. To his great confusion, Julien felt the tears start to his eyes; he was longing to fling himself into the arms of his friend: he could not resist saying to him, with the most manly air that he was capable of affecting:

'I have been hated by my father from the cradle; it was one of my great misfortunes; but I shall no longer complain of fortune. I have found another father in you, Sir.'

'Good, good,' said the abbe, with embarrassment; then remembering most opportunely a phrase from the vocabulary of a Director of a Seminary: 'You must never say fortune, my child, always say Providence.'

The cab stopped; the drier lifted the bronze knocker on an immense door: it was the HOTEL DE LA MOLE; and, so that the passer-by might be left in no doubt of this, the words were to be read on a slab of black marble over the door.

This affectation was not to Julien's liking. 'They are so afraid of the Jacobins! They see a Robespierre and his tumbril behind every hedge; often they make one die with laughing, and they advertise their house like this so that the mob shall know it in the event of a rising, and sack it.' He communicated what was in his mind to the Abbe Pirard.

'Ah! Poor boy, you will soon be my vicar. What an appalling idea to come into your head!'

'I can think of nothing more simple,' said Julien.

The gravity of the porter and above all the cleanness of the courtyard had filled him with admiration. The sun was shining brightly.

'What magnificent architecture!' he said to his friend.

It was one of the typical town houses, with their lifeless fronts, of the Faubourg Saint–Germain, built about the date of Voltaire's death. Never have the fashionable and the beautiful been such worlds apart.

Chapter 2

First Appearance in Society

Absurd and touching memory: one's first appearance, at eighteen, alone and unsupported, in a drawing-room! A glance from a woman was enough to terrify me. The more I tried to shine, the more awkward I became. I formed the most false ideas of everything; either I surrendered myself for no reason, or I saw an enemy in a man because he had looked at me with a serious expression. But then, amid all the fearful sufferings of my shyness, how fine was a fine day!

KANT

Julien stopped in confusion in the middle of the courtyard.

'Do assume a reasonable air,' said the Abbe Picard; 'you take hold of horrible ideas, and you are only a boy! Where is the nil mirari of Horace?' (That is: no enthusiasm.) 'Reflect that this tribe of flunkeys, seeing you established here, will try to make a fool of you; they will regard you as an equal, unjustly set over them. Beneath a show of good nature, of good advice, of a wish to guide you, they will try to catch you out in some stupid blunder.'

'I defy them to do so,' said Julien, biting his lip; and he recovered all his former distrust.

The drawing-rooms through which our friends passed on the first floor, before coming to the Marquis's study, would have seemed to you, gentle reader, as depressing as they were magnificent. Had you been made a present of them as they stood, you would have refused to live in them; they

are the native heath of boredom and dreary argument. They redoubled Julien's enchantment. 'How can anyone be unhappy,' he thought, 'who lives in so splendid a residence?'

Finally, our friends came to the ugliest of the rooms in this superb suite: the daylight barely entered it; here, they found a wizened little man with a keen eye and a fair periwig. The abbe turned to Julien, whom he presented. It was the Marquis. Julien had great difficulty in recognising him, so civil did he find him. This was no longer the great nobleman, so haughty in his mien, of the Abbey of Bray-le-Haut. It seemed to Julien that there was far too much hair in his wig. Thanks to this impression, he was not in the least intimidated. The descendant of Henri III's friend struck him at first as cutting but a poor figure. He was very thin and greatly agitated. But he soon remarked that the Marquis showed a courtesy even more agreeable to the person he was addressing than that of the Bishop of Besancon himself. The audience did not occupy three minutes. As they left the room, the abbe said to Julien:

'You looked at the Marquis as you would have looked at a picture. I am no expert in what these people call politeness, soon you will know more about it than I; still, the boldness of your stare seemed to me to be scarcely polite.'

They had returned to their vehicle; the driver stopped by the boulevard; the abbe led Julien through a series of spacious rooms. Julien remarked that they were unfurnished. He was looking at a magnificent gilt clock, representing a subject that in his opinion was highly indecent, when a most elegant gentleman approached them with an affable expression. Julien made him a slight bow.

The gentleman smiled and laid a hand on his shoulder. Julien quivered and sprang back. He was flushed with anger. The abbe Pirard, for all his gravity, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. The gentleman was a tailor.

'I leave you at liberty for two days,' the abbe told him as they emerged; 'it is not until then that you can be presented to Madame de La Mole. Most people would protect you like a young girl, in these first moments of your sojourn in this modern Babylon. Ruin yourself at once, if you are to be ruined, and I shall be rid of the weakness I show in caring for you. The day after

tomorrow, in the morning, this tailor will bring you two coats; you will give five francs to the boy who tries them on you. Otherwise, do not let these Parisians hear the sound of your voice. If you utter a word, they will find a way of making you look foolish. That is their talent. The day after tomorrow, be at my house at midday . . . Run along, ruin yourself . . . I was forgetting, go and order boots, shirts, a hat at these addresses.'

Julien studied the handwriting of the addresses.

'That is the Marquis's hand,' said the abbe, 'he is an active man who provides for everything, and would rather do a thing himself than order it to be done. He is taking you into his household so that you may save him trouble of this sort. Will you have sufficient intelligence to carry out all the orders that this quick-witted man will suggest to you in a few words? The future will show: have a care!'

Julien, without uttering a word, made his way into the shops indicated on the list of addresses; he observed that he was greeted there with respect, and the bootmaker, in entering his name in his books, wrote 'M. Julien de Sorel'.

In the Cemetery of Pere–Lachaise a gentleman who seemed highly obliging, and even more Liberal in his speech, offered to guide Julien to the tomb of Marshal Ney, from which a wise administration has withheld the honour of an epitaph. But, after parting from this Liberal, who, with tears in his eyes, almost clasped him to his bosom, Julien no longer had a watch. It was enriched by this experience that, two days later, at noon, he presented himself before the abbe Pirard, who studied him attentively.

'You are perhaps going to become a fop,' the abbe said to him, with a severe expression. Julien had the appearance of an extremely young man, in deep mourning; he did, as a matter of fact, look quite well, but the good abbe was himself too provincial to notice that Julien still had that swing of the shoulders which in the provinces betokens at once elegance and importance. On seeing Julien, the Marquis considered his graces in a light so different from that of the good abbe that he said to him:

'Should you have any objection to M. Sorel's taking dancing-lessons?'

The abbe was rooted to the spot.

‘No,’ he replied, at length, ‘Julien is not a priest.’

The Marquis, mounting two steps at a time by a little secret stair, conducted our hero personally to a neat attic which overlooked the huge garden of the house. He asked him how many shirts he had ordered from the hosier.

‘Two,’ replied Julien, dismayed at seeing so great a gentleman descend to these details.

‘Very good,’ said the Marquis, with a serious air, and an imperative, curt note in his voice, which set Julien thinking: ‘very good! Order yourself two and twenty more. Here is your first quarter’s salary.’

As they came down from the attic, the Marquis summoned an elderly man: ‘Arsene,’ he said to him, ‘you will look after M. Sorel.’ A few minutes later, Julien found himself alone in a magnificent library: it was an exquisite moment. So as not to be taken by surprise in his emotion, he went and hid himself in a little dark corner; from which he gazed with rapture at the glittering backs of the books. ‘I can read all of those,’ he told himself. ‘And how should I fail to be happy here? M. de Renal would have thought himself disgraced for ever by doing the hundredth part of what the Marquis de La Mole has just done for me.

‘But first of all, we must copy the letters.’ This task ended, Julien ventured towards the shelves; he almost went mad with joy on finding an edition of Voltaire. He ran and opened the door of the library so as not to be caught. He then gave himself the pleasure of opening each of the eighty volumes in turn. They were magnificently bound, a triumph of the best craftsman in London. This was more than was needed to carry Julien’s admiration beyond all bounds.

An hour later, the Marquis entered the room, examined the copies, and was surprised to see that Julien wrote cela with a double l, cella ‘So all that the abbe has been telling me of his learning is simply a tale!’ The Marquis, greatly discouraged, said to him gently:

‘You are not certain of your spelling?’

‘That is true,’ said Julien, without the least thought of the harm he was doing himself; he was moved by the Marquis’s kindness, which made him think of M. de Renal’s savage tone.

‘It is all a waste of time, this experiment with a little Franc-comtois priest,’ thought the Marquis; ‘but I did so want a trustworthy man.

‘Cela has only one l,’ the Marquis told him; ‘when you have finished your copies, take the dictionary and look out all the words of which you are not certain.’

At six o’clock the Marquis sent for him; he looked with evident dismay at Julien’s boots: ‘I am to blame. I forgot to tell you that every evening at half-past five you must dress.’

Julien looked at him without understanding him.

‘I mean put on stockings. Arsene will remind you; today I shall make your apologies.’

So saying, M. de La Mole ushered Julien into a drawing-room resplendent with gilding. On similar occasions, M. de Renal never failed to increase his pace so that he might have the satisfaction of going first through the door.

The effect of his old employer’s petty vanity was that Julien now trod upon the Marquis’s heels, and caused him considerable pain, owing to his gout. ‘Ah! He is even more of a fool than I thought,’ the Marquis said to himself. He presented him to a woman of tall stature and imposing aspect. It was the Marquise. Julien decided that she had an impertinent air, which reminded him a little of Madame de Maugiron, the Sub–Prefect’s wife of the Verrieres district, when she attended the Saint Charles’s day dinner. Being somewhat embarrassed by the extreme splendour of the room, Julien did not hear what M. de La Mole was saying. The Marquise barely deigned to glance at him. There were several men in the room, among whom Julien recognised with unspeakable delight the young Bishop of Agde, who had condescended to say a few words to him once at the ceremony at Bray-le-Haut. The young prelate was doubtless alarmed by the tender gaze which Julien, in his timidity, fastened upon him, and made no effort to recognise this provincial.

The men assembled in this drawing-room seemed to Julien to be somehow melancholy and constrained; people speak low in Paris, and do not exaggerate trifling matters.

A handsome young man, wearing moustaches, very pale and slender, entered the room at about half-past six; he had an extremely small head.

‘You always keep us waiting,’ said the Marquise, as he kissed her hand.

Julien gathered that this was the Comte de La Mole. He found him charming from the first.

‘Is it possible,’ he said to himself, ‘that this is the man whose offensive pleasantries are going to drive me from this house?’

By dint of a survey of Comte Norbert’s person, Julien discovered that he was wearing boots and spurs; ‘and I ought to be wearing shoes, evidently as his inferior.’ They sat down to table. Julien heard the Marquise utter a word of rebuke, slightly raising her voice. Almost at the same moment he noticed a young person extremely fair and very comely, who was taking her place opposite to him. She did not attract him at all; on studying her attentively, however, he thought that he had never seen such fine eyes; but they hinted at great coldness of heart. Later, Julien decided that they expressed a boredom which studies other people but keeps on reminding itself that it is one’s duty to be imposing. ‘Madame de Renal, too, had the most beautiful eyes,’ he said to himself; ‘people used to compliment her on them; but they had nothing in common with these.’ Julien had not enough experience to discern that it was the fire of wit that shone from time to time in the eyes of Mademoiselle Mathilde, for so he heard her named. When Madame de Renal’s eyes became animated, it was with the fire of her passions, or was due to a righteous indignation upon hearing of some wicked action. Towards the end of dinner, Julien found the right word to describe the type of beauty exemplified by the eyes of Mademoiselle de La Mole: ‘They are scintillating,’ he said to himself. Otherwise, she bore a painful resemblance to her mother, whom he disliked more and more, and he ceased to look at her. Comte Norbert, on the other hand, struck him as admirable in every respect. Julien was so captivated, that it never entered his head to be jealous of him and to hate him, because he was richer and nobler than himself.

Julien thought that the Marquis appeared bored.

During the second course, he said to his son:

‘Norbert, I must ask you to look after M. Julien Sorel, whom I have just taken upon my staff, and intend to make a man of, if that (cela) can be done.

‘He is my secretary,’ the Marquis added to his neighbour, ‘and he spells cela with a double l.’

Everyone looked at Julien, who gave Norbert a slightly exaggerated bow; but on the whole, they were satisfied with his appearance.

The Marquis must have spoken of the kind of education that Julien had received, for one of the guests tackled him upon Horace: ‘It was precisely in discussing Horace that I was successful with the Bishop of Besancon,’ Julien said to himself, ‘evidently he is the only author they know.’ From that moment he was master of himself. This change was made easy by his having just decided that Mademoiselle de La Mole would never be a woman in his eyes. Since his Seminary days he defied men to do their worst, and refused to be intimidated by them. He would have enjoyed perfect self-possession, had the dining-room been furnished with less magnificence. It was, as a matter of fact, a pair of mirrors, each of them eight feet high, in which he caught sight now and then of his challenger as he spoke of Horace, that still continued to overawe him. His sentences were not unduly long for a provincial. He had fine eyes, the sparkle in which was enhanced by his tremulous, or, when he had made a good answer, his happy shyness. This sort of examination made a serious dinner-party quite interesting. The Marquis made a sign to the other speaker to press Julien hard. ‘Can it be possible that he does know something?’ he thought.

Julien found fresh ideas as he answered, and lost enough of his shyness not, indeed, to display wit, a thing impossible to a person ignorant of the language that is spoken in Paris, but he had original ideas, albeit expressed without gracefulness or appropriateness, and it could be seen that he had a thorough knowledge of Latin.

His adversary was a member of the Academy of Inscriptions, who happened to know Latin; he found in Julien an excellent humanist, lost all fear of making him blush, and really did seek to embarrass him. In the heat of the duel, Julien at length forgot the magnificent decoration of the dining-room, and began to express ideas with regard to the Latin poets, which the other had never read in any book. Being an honest man, he gave the credit for them to the young secretary. Fortunately, the discussion turned to the question whether Horace had been poor or rich: an amiable person, sensual and easy-going, making poetry for his own amusement, like Chapelle, the friend of Moliere and La Fontaine; or a poor devil of a Poet Laureate attached to the court and composing odes for the King's Birthday, like Southey, the traducer of Lord Byron. They spoke of the state of society under Augustus and under George IV; in both epochs the aristocracy was all-powerful! but in Rome it saw its power wrested from it by Maecenas, who was a mere knight; and in England it had reduced George IV more or less to the position of a Doge of Venice. This discussion seemed to draw the Marquis out of the state of torpor in which his boredom had kept him plunged at the beginning of dinner.

Julien could make nothing of all these modern names, such as Southey, Lord Byron, George IV, which he now heard for the first time. But no one could fail to observe that whenever there was any question of historical events at Rome, a knowledge of which might be derived from the works of Horace, Martial, Tacitus, etc., he had an unchallengeable superiority. Julien appropriated without a scruple a number of ideas which he had acquired from the Bishop of Besancon, during the famous discussion he had had with that prelate; these proved to be not the least acceptable.

When the party tired of discussing poets, the Marquise, who made it a rule to admire anything that amused her husband, condescended to glance at Julien. 'The awkward manners of this young cleric may perhaps be concealing a learned man,' the Academician, who was sitting near her, said to the Marquise; and Julien overheard something of what he was saying. Ready-made phrases were quite to the taste of his hostess; she adopted this description of Julien, and was glad that she had invited the Academician to dine. 'He amuses M. de La Mole,' she thought.

Chapter 3

First Steps

That immense valley filled with brilliant lights and with all those thousands of people dazzles my sight. Not one of them knows me, all are superior to me. My head reels.

Poemi dell' avvocato, REINA

Early in the morning of the following day, Julien was copying letters in the library, when Mademoiselle Mathilde entered by a little private door, cleverly concealed with shelves of dummy books. While Julien was admiring this device, Mademoiselle Mathilde appeared greatly surprised and distinctly annoyed to see him there. Julien decided that her curlpapers gave her a hard, haughty, almost masculine air. Mademoiselle de La Mole had a secret habit of stealing books from her father's library, undetected. Julien's presence frustrated her expedition that morning, which annoyed her all the more as she had come to secure the second volume of Voltaire's Princesse de Babylone, a fitting complement to an eminently monarchical and religious education, a triumph on the part of the Sacre–Coeur! This poor girl, at nineteen, already required the spice of wit to make her interested in a novel.

Comte Norbert appeared in the library about three o'clock; he had come to study a newspaper, in order to be able to talk politics that evening, and was quite pleased to find Julien, whose existence he had forgotten. He was charming to him, and offered to lend him a horse.

'My father is letting us off until dinner.'

Julien appreciated this us, and thought it charming.

‘Heavens, Monsieur le Comte,’ said Julien, ‘if it were a question of felling an eighty-foot tree, trimming it and sawing it into planks, I venture to say that I should manage it well enough; but riding a horse is a thing I haven’t done six times in my life.’

‘Well, this will be the seventh,’ said Norbert.

Privately, Julien remembered the entry of the King of —— into Verrieres and imagined himself a superior horseman. But, on their way back from the Bois de Boulogne, in the very middle of the Rue du Bac, he fell off, while trying to avoid a passing cab, and covered himself in mud. It was fortunate for him that he had a change of clothes. At the dinner the Marquis, wishing to include him in the conversation, asked him about his ride; Norbert made haste to reply in generous language.

‘Monsieur le Comte is too kind to me,’ put in Julien. ‘I thank him for it, and fully appreciate his kindness. He has been so good as to give me the quietest and handsomest of horses; but after all he could not glue me on to it, and, that being so, I fell off right in the middle of that very long street near the bridge.’

Mademoiselle Mathilde tried in vain to stifle a peal of laughter; finally indiscretion prevailed and she begged for details. Julien emerged from the difficulty with great simplicity; he had an unconscious grace.

‘I augur well of this little priest,’ the Marquis said to the Academician; ‘a simple countryman in such a scrape! Such a thing was never yet seen and never will be seen; in addition to which he relates his misadventure before the ladies!’

Julien set his listeners so thoroughly at ease over his mishap that at the end of dinner, when the general conversation had taken another turn, Mademoiselle Mathilde began to ply her brother with questions as to the details of the distressing event. As her inquiry continued, and as Julien more than once caught her eye, he ventured to reply directly, although he had not been questioned, and all three ended in laughter, just like three young peasants from a village in the heart of a forest.

On the following day Julien attended two lectures on theology, and then returned to transcribe a score of letters. He found ensconced by his own place in the library a young man dressed with great neatness, but his general appearance was ignominious and his expression one of envy.

The Marquis entered.

‘What are you doing here, Monsieur Tanbeau?’ he asked the newcomer in a severe tone.

‘I thought,’ the young man began with a servile smile.

‘No, Sir, you did not think. This is an attempt, but it is an unfortunate one.’

Young Tanbeau rose in a fury and left the room. He was a nephew of the Academician, Madame de La Mole’s friend, and was intended for a literary career. The Academician had persuaded the Marquis to take him as a secretary. Tanbeau, who worked in a room apart, having heard of the favour that was being bestowed upon Julien, was anxious to share it, and that morning had come and set up his desk in the library.

At four o’clock, Julien ventured, after some hesitation, to seek out Comte Norbert. This young gentleman was going out riding, and was somewhat embarrassed, for his manners were perfect.

‘I think,’ he said to Julien, ‘that presently you might go to the riding school; and after a few weeks I shall be delighted to ride with you.’

‘I wished to have the honour of thanking you for all your kindness to me; pray believe, Sir,’ Julien added with a most serious air, ‘that I am fully conscious of all that I owe you. If your horse is not injured as a result of my clumsiness yesterday, and if it is free, I should like to ride it today.’

‘Faith, my dear Sorel, on your own head be it! Assume that I have raised all the objections that prudence demands; the fact is that it is four o’clock, we have no time to lose.’

After he was in the saddle:

‘What must one do, not to fall off?’ Julien asked the young Comte.

‘All sorts of things,’ replied Norbert with a shout of laughter: ‘for instance, sit well back.’

Julien began to trot. They were crossing the Place Louis XVI.

‘Ah! Young hothead, there are too many carriages here, and with careless drivers too. Once you are on the ground, their tilburys will go bowling over you; they are not going to risk hurting their horses’ mouths by pulling up short.’

A score of times Norbert saw Julien on the point of falling; but at last their ride ended without mishap. On their return, the young Comte said to his sister:

‘Let me introduce a regular dare-devil.’

At dinner, speaking to his father, down the length of the table, he did justice to Julien’s courage; it was all that one could praise in his method of riding. During the day the young Comte had heard the men who were grooming the horses in the yard make Julien’s fall an excuse for the most outrageous mockery of him.

In spite of all this kindness, Julien soon felt himself completely isolated among this family. All their customs seemed strange to him, and he was always making mistakes. His blunders were the delight of the footmen.

The abbe Pirard had gone off to his living. ‘If Julien is a frail reed, let him perish; if he is a man of courage, let him make his way by himself,’ he thought.

Chapter 4

The Hotel de La Mole

What is he doing here? might it please him? might he think to please?

RONSARD

If everything seemed strange to Julien, in the noble drawing-room of the Hotel de La Mole, the young man himself, pale and dressed in black, seemed in turn highly singular to those who deigned to notice him. Madame de La Mole suggested that her husband should send him away on business upon days when certain personages were coming to dine.

‘I should like to carry through the experiment,’ replied the Marquis. ‘The abbe Pirard maintains that we do wrong to crush the self-respect of the people we admit into our households. One can lean only upon what resists, etc. There is nothing wrong with this fellow except his uncouth appearance; he might be deaf and dumb.’

‘If I am to keep my bearings, I must,’ Julien said to himself, ‘write down the names and a few words as to the character of the people I see appear in this drawing-room.’

At the head of his list he placed five or six friends of the family who paid a desperate court to him, supposing him to be protected by some caprice of the Marquis. These were poor devils, more or less spiritless; but, it must be said in praise of men of this class as they are to be found today in the drawing-rooms of the nobility, they were not equally spiritless to all comers. Some of them would have let themselves be abused by the Marquis, and yet would

have revolted against a harsh word addressed to them by Madame de La Mole.

There was too much pride, there was too much boredom in the character of both host and hostess; they were too much in the habit of insulting people for their own distraction, to be able to expect any true friends. But, except on wet days, and in their moments of furious boredom, which were rare, they were never to be found wanting in politeness.

If the five or six flatterers who treated Julien with such fatherly affection had deserted the Hotel de La Mole, the Marquise would have been left to long hours of solitude; and, in the eyes of women of her rank, solitude is a dreadful thing: it is the badge of disgrace.

The Marquis behaved admirably to his wife; he saw to it that her drawing-room was adequately filled; not with peers, he found his new colleagues scarcely noble enough to come to his house as friends, nor entertaining enough to be admitted as subordinates.

It was not until much later that Julien discovered these secrets. The political questions which form the chief topic in middle-class houses are never mentioned in houses like that of the Marquis, save in times of trouble.

So powerful still, even in this age of boredom, are the dictates of the need of amusement, that even on the evenings of dinnerparties, as soon as the Marquis had left the drawing-room, everyone else fled. So long as you did not speak lightly of God, or of the clergy, or of the King, or of the men in power, or of the artists patronised by the court, or of anything established; so long as you did not say anything good of Beranger, or of the opposition press, or of Voltaire, or of Rousseau, or of anything that allowed itself the liberty of a little freedom of speech; so long, above all, as you did not talk politics, you could discuss anything you pleased with freedom.

There is no income of a hundred thousand crowns, no blue riband that can prevail against a drawing-room so constituted. The smallest living idea seemed an outrage. Despite good tone, perfect manners, the desire to be agreeable, boredom was written upon every brow. The young men who came to pay their respects, afraid to speak of anything that might lead to their

being suspected of thinking, afraid to reveal some forbidden reading, became silent after a few elegantly phrased sentences on Rossini and the weather.

Julien observed that the conversation was usually kept going by two Viscounts and five Barons whom M. de La Mole had known during the Emigration. These gentlemen enjoyed incomes of from six to eight thousand livres; four of them swore by the Quotidienne, and three by the Gazette de France. One of them had some new story to tell every day of the Chateau, in which the word 'admirable' was lavishly used. Julien remarked that this man wore five Crosses, whereas the others, as a rule, had no more than three.

On the other hand, you saw in the ante-room ten footmen in livery, and all through the evening you had ices or tea every quarter of an hour; and, at midnight, a sort of supper with champagne.

It was for this reason that Julien sometimes remained to the end; otherwise, he failed to understand how anyone could listen seriously to the ordinary conversation of this drawing-room, so magnificently gilded. Now and again he would watch the speakers, to see whether they themselves were not laughing at what they were saying. 'My M. de Maistre, whom I know by heart, has said things a hundred times better,' he thought; 'and even he is extremely boring.'

Julien was not the only one to be aware of the mental stagnation. Some consoled themselves by taking quantities of ices; the others with the pleasure of being able to say for the rest of the evening: 'I have just come from the Hotel de La Mole, where I heard that Russia', etc., etc.

Julien learned, from one of the flatterers, that less than six months ago Madame de La Mole had rewarded an assiduity that had lasted for more than twenty years by securing a Prefecture for poor Baron Le Bourguignon, who had been a Sub–Prefect ever since the Restoration.

This great event had rekindled the zeal of these gentlemen; the least thing might have offended them before, now they were no longer offended by anything. It was rare that the incivility was direct, but Julien had already overheard at table two or three brief little passages between the Marquis and his wife, wounding to those who were placed near them. These noble

personages did not conceal their sincere contempt for everyone that was not the offspring of people who rode in the King's carriages. Julien observed that the word Crusade was the only one that brought to their faces an expression of intense seriousness, blended with respect. Their ordinary respect had always a shade of condescension.

In the midst of this magnificence and this boredom, Julien was interested in nothing but M. de La Mole; he listened with pleasure one day to his protestations that he was in no way responsible for the promotion of that poor Le Bourguignon. This was a delicate attention to the Marquise: Julien had learned the truth from the abbe Pirard.

One morning when the abbe was working with Julien, in the Marquis's library, on the endless litigation with Frilair:

'Sir,' said Julien suddenly, 'is dining every evening with Madame la Marquise one of my duties, or is it a favour that they show me?'

'It is a signal honour!' replied the abbe, greatly shocked. 'M. N —— , the Academician, who has been paying assiduous court for the last fifteen years, has never been able to obtain it for his nephew M. Tanbeau.'

'It is to me, Sir, the most tedious part of my employment. I was less bored at the Seminary. I see even Mademoiselle de La Mole yawn at times, although she must be accustomed to the pretty speeches of the friends of the family. I am afraid of falling asleep. Please be so good as to obtain leave for me to go and dine for forty sous in some obscure inn.'

The abbe, a regular parvenu, was highly sensible of the honour of dining with a great nobleman. While he was endeavouring to make Julien understand what he felt, a slight sound made them turn their heads. Julien saw Mademoiselle de La Mole who was listening. He blushed. She had come in search of a book and had heard everything; she felt a certain respect for Julien. 'This fellow was not born on his knees,' she thought, 'like that old abbe. Heavens! How ugly he is.'

At dinner, Julien dared not look at Mademoiselle de La Mole, but she was so kind as to speak to him. That evening, they expected a large party; she made

him promise to remain. Girls in Paris do not care for men of a certain age, especially when they are not well dressed. Julien did not require much sagacity to perceive that M. Le Bourguignon's colleagues, who remained in the drawing-room, had the honour to be the customary butt of Mademoiselle de La Mole's wit. That evening, whether with deliberate affectation or not, she was cruel in her treatment of the bores.

Mademoiselle de La Mole was the centre of a little group that assembled almost every evening behind the Marquise's immense armchair. There, you would find the Marquis de Croisenois, the Comte de Caylus, the Vicomte de Luz and two or three other young officers, friends of Norbert or his sister. These gentlemen sat upon a large blue sofa. At the end of the sofa, opposite to that occupied by the brilliant Mathilde, Julien was silently installed upon a little cane-bottomed chair with a low seat. This modest post was the envy of all the flatterers; Norbert kept his father's young secretary in countenance by addressing him or uttering his name once or twice in the course of the evening. On this occasion, Mademoiselle de La Mole asked him what might be the height of the mountain on which the citadel of Besancon stood. Julien could not for the life of him have said whether this mountain was higher or lower than Montmartre. Often he laughed heartily at what was being said in the little group; but he felt himself incapable of thinking of anything similar to say. It was like a foreign language which he could understand, but was unable to speak.

Mathilde's friends were that evening in a state of constant hostility towards the people who kept arriving in this vast drawing-room. The friends of the family had the preference at first, being better known. One can imagine whether Julien was attentive; everything interested him, both the things themselves, and the way they were made to seem ridiculous.

'Ah! Here comes M. Descoulis,' said Mathilde; 'he has left off his wig; can he be hoping to secure a Prefecture by his genius? He is exposing that bald brow which he says is filled with lofty thoughts.'

'He is a man who knows the whole world,' said the Marquis de Croisenois; 'he comes to my uncle, the Cardinal's, too. He is capable of cultivating a lie with each of his friends, for years on end, and he has two or three hundred friends. He knows how to foster friendship, that is his talent. You ought to

see him, covered in mud, at the door of a friend's house, at seven o'clock on a winter morning.

'He hatches a quarrel, now and again, and writes seven or eight letters to keep up the quarrel. Then he is reconciled, and produces seven or eight letters for the transports of affection. But it is in the frank and sincere expansion of an honest man who can keep nothing on his conscience that he shines most. This is his favourite device when he has some favour to ask. One of my uncle's Vicars–General is perfect when he relates the life of M. Descoulis since the Restoration. I shall bring him to see you.'

'Bah! I shouldn't listen to that talk; it is the professional jealousy of small-minded people,' said the Comte de Caylus.

'M. Descoulis will have a name in history,' the Marquis went on; 'he made the Restoration with the Abbe de Pradt and M. Talleyrand and Pozzo di Borgo.'

'That man has handled millions,' said Norbert, 'and I cannot conceive why he comes here to swallow my father's epigrams, which are often appalling. "How many times have you betrayed your friends, my dear Descoulis?" he shouted at him the other day, down the whole length of the table.'

'But is it true that he has betrayed people?' said Mademoiselle de La Mole. 'Who is there that has not?'

'What!' said the Comte de Caylus to Norbert, 'you have M. Sainclair here, the notorious Liberal; what the devil can he have come for? I must go over to him, and talk to him, and make him talk; they say he is so clever.'

'But how can your mother have him in the house?' said M de Croisenois. 'His ideas are so extravagant, so enthusiastic, so independent . . .'

'Look,' said Mademoiselle de La Mole, 'there is your independent man, bowing to the ground before M. Descoulis, and seizing his hand. I almost thought he was going to raise it to his lips.'

'Descoulis must stand better with the authorities than we thought,' put in M. de Croisenois.

‘Sainclair comes here to get into the Academy,’ said Norbert; ‘look how he is bowing to Baron L —— , Croisenois.’

‘He would be less servile if he went on his knees,’ put in M. de Luz.

‘My dear Sorel,’ said Norbert, ‘you who are a man of brains, but have just come down from your mountains, see that you never bow to people as that great poet does, not even to God Almighty.’

‘Ah! Here comes a man of brains if you like, M. le Baron Baton,’ said Mademoiselle de La Mole, imitating the voice of the footman who had just announced him.

‘I think even your servants laugh at him. What a name, Baron Baton!’ said M. de Caylus.

‘“What’s in a name?” as he said to us the other day,’ retorted Mathilde. ‘“Imagine the Duc de Bouillon announced for the first time. All the public needs, in my case, is to have grown accustomed to it.”’

Julien quitted the circle round the sofa. Still but little sensible of the charming subtleties of a light-handed mockery, if he were to laugh at a witticism, he required that it should be founded on reason. He could see nothing in the talk of these young men, but the tone of general depreciation, and this shocked him. His provincial or English prudery went so far as to detect envy in it, wherein he was certainly mistaken.

‘Comte Norbert,’ he said to himself, ‘whom I have seen make three rough copies of a letter of twenty lines to his Colonel, would be very glad to have written a single page in his life like those of M. Sainclair.’

Passing unperceived owing to his lack of importance, Julien approached several groups in turn; he was following Baron Baton at a distance, and wished to hear him talk. This man of such intelligence wore a troubled air, and Julien saw him recover himself a little only when he had hit upon three or four sparkling sentences. It seemed to Julien that this kind of wit required ample room to develop itself.

The Baron could not produce epigrams; he required at least four sentences of six lines each to be brilliant.

‘This man is holding forth, he is not talking,’ said someone behind Julien’s back. He turned round and flushed with pleasure when he heard the name of Comte Chalvet. This was the cleverest man of the day. Julien had often come upon his name in the Memorial de Sainte–Helene and in the fragments of history dictated by Napoleon. Comte Chalvet was curt in his speech; his remarks were flashes of lightning, accurate, keen, profound. If he spoke of any public matter, immediately one saw the discussion reach a fresh stage. He brought facts to bear on it, it was a pleasure to listen to him. In politics, however, he was a brazen cynic.

‘I am independent, myself,’ he was saying to a gentleman wearing three decorations, whom he was apparently quizzing. ‘Why should I be expected to hold the same opinion today that I held six weeks ago? If I did, I should be a slave to my opinion.’

Four grave young men who stood round him made grimaces at this; these gentlemen do not care for the flippant style. The Comte saw that he had gone too far. Fortunately he caught sight of the honest M. Balland, a tartuffe of honesty. The Comte began talking to him: people gathered round them, guessing that poor Balland was going to be scarified. By dint of morals and morality, although horribly ugly, and after early struggles with the world which it would be hard to describe, M. Balland had married an extremely rich wife, who died; then a second extremely rich wife, who was never seen in society. He enjoyed in all humility an income of sixty thousand livres, and had flatterers of his own. Comte Chalvet spoke to him of all this, without pity. Presently they were surrounded by a circle of thirty people. Everyone smiled, even the grave young men, the hope of the age.

‘Why does he come to M. de La Mole’s, where he is obviously made a butt?’ thought Julien. He went across to the abbe Pirard, to ask him.

M. Balland left the room.

‘Good!’ said Norbert, ‘there’s one of my father’s spies gone; that leaves only the little cripple Napier.’

‘Can that be the clue to the riddle?’ thought Julien. ‘But, in that case, why does the Marquis invite M. Balland?’

The stern abbe Pirard was making faces in a corner of the room, as he heard fresh names announced.

‘Why, it is a den,’ he said, like Basilic, ‘I see none but villains enter.’

The fact was that the stern abbe did not recognise the distinguishing marks of good society. But, from his Jansenist friends, he had a very accurate notion of the men who make their way into drawing-rooms only by their extreme cleverness in the service of all parties, or by a fortune of notorious origin. For some minutes, that evening, he replied from the abundance of his heart to Julien’s eager questions, then cut himself short, distressed to find himself speaking ill of everyone, and imputing it to himself as a sin. Being choleric and a Jansenist, and regarding Christian charity as a duty, his life in society was a perpetual conflict.

‘How frightful that abbe Pirard looks!’ Mademoiselle de La Mole was saying, as Julien returned to the sofa.

Julien felt a sting of irritation, and yet she was right. M. Pirard was beyond question the most honest man in the room, but his blotched face, distorted by the pangs of conscience, made him hideous at the moment. ‘Never judge by appearances after this,’ thought Julien; ‘it is at the moment when the abbe’s scruples are reproaching him with some peccadillo that he looks terrible; whereas on the face of that Napier, whom everyone knows to be a spy, one sees a pure and tranquil happiness.’ The abbe Pirard had nevertheless made a great concession to his party; he had engaged a valet, and was quite well dressed.

Julien remarked a singular occurrence in the drawing-room: this was a general movement of all eyes towards the door, with a lull in the conversation. A footman announced the famous Baron de Tolly, to whom the recent elections had attracted universal attention. Julien moved forward and had an excellent view of him. The Baron was returning officer in a certain constituency: he had had the bright idea of making away with the little slips of paper bearing the votes of one of the parties. But, to compensate for this,

he duly replaced them with other little slips of paper bearing a name of which he himself approved. This decisive manoeuvre was observed by some of the electors, who lost no time in presenting their compliments to Baron de Tolly. The worthy man was still pale after his great excitement. Evil tongues had uttered the word galleys. M. de La Mole received him coldly. The poor Baron hurriedly made his escape.

'If he leaves us so soon, it must be to go to M. Comte's,'† said Comte Chalvet; and the others laughed.

† A celebrated conjurer of the day.]

Amid a crowd of great noblemen who remained silent, and of intriguers, mostly disreputable, but all of them clever fellows, who arrived one after another that evening, in M. de La Mole's drawing-room (people were speaking of him for a vacant Ministry), young Tanbeau was winning his spurs. If he had not yet acquired any fineness of perception, he made up for the deficiency, as we shall see, by the vigour of his language.

'Why not sentence the man to ten years' imprisonment?' he was saying at the moment when Julien joined his group; 'it is in a dungeon underground that we ought to keep reptiles shut up; they must be made to die in the dark, otherwise their venom spreads and becomes more dangerous. What is the good of fining him a thousand crowns? He is poor, very well, all the better; but his party will pay the fine for him. It should have been a fine of five hundred francs and ten years in a dungeon.'

'Good God! Who can the monster be that they are discussing?' thought Julien, marvelling at his colleague's vehement tone and stilted gestures. The thin, drawn little face of the Academician's favourite nephew was hideous as he spoke. Julien soon learned that the person in question was the greatest poet of the day.†

† Beranger, sentenced in December, 1828, to imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 francs. C. K. S. M.]

'Ah, monster!' exclaimed Julien, half aloud, and generous tears sprang to his eyes. 'Ah, little wretch, I shall make you eat those words.

‘And yet these,’ he thought, ‘are the waifs and strays of the party of which the Marquis is one of the leaders! And that illustrious man whom he is slandering, how many Crosses, how many sinecures might he not have collected, if he had sold himself, I do not say to the lifeless Ministry of M. de Nerval, but to one of those passably honest Ministers whom we have seen succeed one another in office?’

The abbe Pirard beckoned to Julien; M. de La Mole had just been saying something to him. But when Julien, who at the moment was listening, with lowered gaze, to the lamentations of a Bishop, was free to move, and able to join his friend, he found him monopolised by that abominable young Tanbeau. The little monster loathed him as the source of the favour that Julien enjoyed, and had come to pay court to him.

‘When will death rid us of that old mass of corruption?’ It was in these terms, with Biblical emphasis, that the little man of letters was speaking at that moment of the eminent Lord Holland. His chief merit was a thorough knowledge of the biography of living men, and he had just been making a rapid survey of all those who might aspire to positions of influence under the new King of England.

The abbe Pirard moved into an adjoining room; Julien followed him.

‘The Marquis does not like scribblers, I warn you; it is his one antipathy. Know Latin, Greek if you can, the History of the Egyptians, of the Persians, and so forth; he will honour you and protect you as a scholar. But do not go and write a single page in French, especially upon grave subjects, that are above your position in society; he would call you a scribbler, and would take a dislike to you. What, living in a great nobleman’s mansion, don’t you know the Duc de Castries’s saying about d’Alembert and Rousseau: “That sort of fellow wishes to argue about everything, and has not a thousand crowns a year?”’

‘Everything becomes known,’ thought Julien, ‘here as in the Seminary.’ He had written nine or ten pages with distinct emphasis: they were a sort of historical eulogy of the old Surgeon–Major, who, he said, had made a man of him. ‘And that little copy-book,’ Julien said to himself, ‘has always been kept under lock and key.’ He went upstairs, burned his manuscript and

returned to the drawing-room. The brilliant rogues had departed, there remained only the stars and ribands.

Round the table, which the servants had just brought in already laid, were seated seven or eight ladies, extremely noble, extremely religious, extremely affected, between thirty and thirty-five years of age. The brilliant wife of Marshal de Fervaques entered the room, apologising for the lateness of the hour. It was after midnight; she took her place next to the Marquise. Julien was deeply stirred; her eyes and her expression reminded him of Madame de Renal.

The group round Mademoiselle de La Mole was still numerous. She and her friends were engaged in making fun of the unfortunate Comte de Thaler. This was the only son of the famous Jew, celebrated for the riches that he had acquired by lending money to Kings to make war on the common people. The Jew had recently died leaving his son a monthly income of one hundred thousand crowns, and a name that, alas, was only too well known! This singular position required either simplicity of character or great determination.

Unfortunately, the Comte was nothing but a good fellow, adorned with all sorts of pretensions inspired in him by his flatterers.

M. de Caylus asserted that he had been credited with the determination to propose for the hand of Mademoiselle de La Mole (to whom the Marquis de Croisenois, who was heir to a Dukedom with an income of one hundred thousand livres, was paying court).

‘Ah! Don’t accuse him of having any determination,’ Norbert pleaded compassionately.

What this poor Comte de Thaler most lacked was, perhaps, the power to determine anything. In this respect, he would have made an excellent King. Taking advice incessantly from everybody, he had not the courage to follow out any suggestion to the end.

His features would have been enough by themselves, said Mademoiselle de La Mole, to fill her with everlasting joy. His face was a curious blend of

uneasiness and disappointment; but from time to time one could make out quite plainly bursts of self-importance, combined with that cutting tone which the wealthiest man in France ought to adopt, especially when he is by no means bad-looking, and is not yet thirty-six. ‘He is timidly insolent,’ said M. de Croisenois. The Comte de Caylus, Norbert and two or three young men with moustaches made fun of him to their hearts’ content, without his guessing it, and finally sent him away as one o’clock struck.

‘Is it your famous pair of arabs that you are keeping waiting in this weather?’ Norbert asked him.

‘No, I have a new pair that cost much less,’ replied M. de Thaler. ‘The near horse cost me five thousand francs, and the off horse is only worth a hundred louis; but I must have you understand that he is only brought out at night. The fact is that he trots perfectly with the other.’

Norbert’s remark made the Comte think that it befitted a man in his position to have a passion for horses, and that he ought not to allow his to stand in the rain. He left, and the other gentlemen took their leave immediately, laughing at him as they went.

‘And so,’ thought Julien, as he heard the sound of their laughter on the staircase, ‘I have been allowed to see the opposite extreme to my own position! I have not an income of twenty louis, and I have found myself rubbing shoulders with a man who has an income of twenty louis an hour, and they laughed at him . . . A sight like that cures one of envy.’

Chapter 5

Sensibility and a Pious Lady

The smallest living idea seems an outrage, so accustomed are people there to words without colour. Woe to the man who innovates while he speaks!

FAUBLAS

After many months of trial, this is the stage that Julien had reached on the day when the steward of the household paid him his third quarter's salary. M. de La Mole had set him to study the management of his estates in Brittany and Normandy. Julien made frequent journeys to those parts. His principal duty was to take charge of the correspondence relative to the famous lawsuit with the abbe de Frilair. M. Pirard had given him the necessary instructions.

>From the brief notes which the Marquis used to scribble on the margins of the papers of all kinds that came to him, Julien composed letters almost all of which were signed.

At the school of theology, his teachers complained of his lack of industry, but regarded him none the less as one of their most distinguished pupils. These several labours, taken up with all the ardour of a chafed ambition, had soon robbed Julien of the fresh complexion he had brought with him from the country. His pallor was a merit in the eyes of the young seminarists his companions; he found them much less irritating, much less inclined to fall upon their knees before a coin of the realm than those at Besancon; they, for their part, supposed him to be consumptive. The Marquis had given him a horse.

Afraid of their seeing him when he was out riding, Julien had told them that this exercise had been ordered him by the doctors. The abbe Pirard had taken him to a number of Jansenist societies. Julien was astonished; the idea of religion was inseparably linked in his mind with that of hypocrisy, and the hope of making money. He admired these devout and stern men who took no interest in the budget. Several of the Jansenists had formed an affection for him and gave him advice. A new world opened before him. He met among the Jansenists a certain Conte Altamira, a man six feet in height, a Liberal under sentence of death in his own country, and a devout Catholic. This strange incongruity, religion wedded to a love of freedom, impressed him.

Julien was out of favour with the young Count. Norbert had found that he replied with too much warmth to the pleasantries of certain of his friends. Julien after being guilty once or twice of a breach of good manners, had pledged himself never to address another word to Mademoiselle Mathilde. They were always perfectly civil to him at the Hotel de La Mole; but he felt that he had fallen in their esteem. His provincial common sense explained this change in the words of the popular proverb: ‘new is beautiful.’

Perhaps his perception was now a little clearer than at first, or else the first fascination produced by the urbanity of Paris had ceased.

As soon as he stopped working, he fell into the clutches of a deadly boredom; this was the withering effect of the politeness, admirable in itself, but so measured, so perfectly graduated according to one’s position, which is a mark of high society. A heart that is at all sensitive discerns the artificiality.

No doubt, provincials may be accused of a trace of vulgarity, or of a want of politeness; but they do show a little warmth in answering one. Never, in the Hotel de La Mole, was Julien’s self-esteem wounded; but often, at the end of the day he felt inclined to weep. In the provinces, a waiter in a cafe takes an interest in you if you meet with some accident on entering his cafe; but if that accident involves anything capable of wounding your vanity, then, in condoling with you, he will repeat again and again the word that makes you wince. In Paris they are so considerate as to turn their backs to laugh at you, but you will always remain a stranger.

We pass without comment over a multitude of minor adventures which would have brought Julien into ridicule had he not been in a sense beneath ridicule. An insane self-consciousness made him commit thousands of blunders. All his pleasures were forms of precaution; he practised with his pistol every day, and was numbered among the more promising pupils of the most famous fencing masters. Whenever he had a moment to spare, instead of spending it with a book as at one time, he would dash to the riding school and as ask for the most vicious horses. In his outings with the riding master, he was almost invariably thrown.

The Marquis found him useful owing to his persistent hard work, his reticence and his intelligence, and, by degrees, entrusted him with the handling of all his business that was at all complicated. In those moments in which his lofty ambition allowed him some relaxation, the Marquis did his business with sagacity; being in a position to hear all the latest news, he speculated with success. He bought houses, timber; but he took offence easily. He gave away hundreds of louis and went to law over hundreds of francs. Rich men with big ideas seek amusement and not results from their private undertakings. The Marquis needed a chief of staff who would put all his financial affairs into an easily intelligible order.

Madame de La Mole, albeit of so restrained a character, would sometimes make fun of Julien. The unexpected, an outcome of sensibility, horrifies great ladies; it is a direct challenge to all the conventions. On two or three occasions the Marquis took his part: ‘If he is absurd in your drawing-room, in his own office he reigns supreme.’ Julien, for his part, thought he could divine the Marquise’s secret. She deigned to take an interest in everything as soon as her servants announced the Baron de La Joumate. This was a chilly creature, with expressionless features. He was small, thin, ugly, very well dressed, he spent all his time at the Chateau and, as a rule, had nothing to say about anything. His speech revealed his mind. Madame de La Mole would have been passionately happy, for the first time in her life, if she could have secured him as a husband for her daughter.

Chapter 6

Pronunciation

Their lofty mission is to pass calm judgment on the trivial events in the daily life of nations. Their wisdom should preempt any fury caused by little things, or by events which the voice of repute transfigures in bruiting them abroad.

GRATIUS

For a newcomer, who, out of pride, never asked any questions, Julien managed to avoid any serious pitfall. One day, when he had been driven into a cafe in the Rue Saint–Honore by a sudden shower, a tall man in a beaver coat, surprised at his gloomy stare, began to stare back at him exactly as Mademoiselle Amanda's lover had stared at him, long before, at Besancon.

Julien had too often reproached himself for having allowed the former insult to pass unpunished to tolerate this stare. He demanded an explanation, the man in the greatcoat at once began to abuse him in the foulest terms: everyone in the cafe gathered round them; the passers-by stopped outside the door. With provincial caution, Julien always carried a brace of pocket pistols; his hand gripped one of these in his pocket with a convulsive movement. Better counsels prevailed, however, and he confined himself to repeating with clockwork regularity: 'Sir, your address? I scorn you.'

The persistence with which he clung to these six words began to impress the crowd.

'Gad, that other fellow who goes on talking by himself ought to give him his address.' The man in the greatcoat, hearing this opinion freely vented, flung

a handful of visiting cards in Julien's face. Fortunately, none of them hit him, he had vowed that he would use his pistol only in the event of his being touched. The man went away, not without turning round from time to time to shake his fist at Julien and to shout abuse.

Julien found himself bathed in sweat. 'So it lies within the power of the lowest of mankind to work me up like this!' he said angrily to himself. 'How am I to destroy this humiliating sensibility?'

Where was he to find a second? He had made the acquaintance of a number of men; but all of them, after six weeks or so, had drifted away from him. 'I am unsociable, and here I am cruelly punished for it,' he thought. Finally, it occurred to him to apply to a retired Lieutenant of the 96th named Lieven, a poor devil with whom he used often to fence. Julien was frank with him.

'I shall be glad to be your second,' said Lieven, 'but upon one condition: if you do not hit your man, you shall fight with me, there and then.'

'Agreed,' said Julien, with delight; and they went to find M. C. de Beauvoisis at the address indicated upon his cards, in the heart of the Faubourg Saint–Germain.

It was seven o'clock in the morning. It was only when he sent in his name that it occurred to Julien that this might be Madame de Renal's young relative, formerly attached to the Embassy at Rome or Naples, who had given the singer Geronimo a letter of introduction.

Julien had handed to a tall footman one of the cards flung at him the day before, together with one of his own.

He was kept waiting, with his second, for fully three quarters of an hour; finally they were shown into an admirably furnished apartment. They found a tall young man, got up like a doll; his features exemplified the perfection and the insignificance of Grecian beauty. His head, remarkably narrow, was crowned with a pyramid of the most beautiful golden locks. These were curled with scrupulous care, not a hair stood out from the rest. 'It is to have his hair curled like that,' thought the Lieutenant of the 96th, 'that this damned idiot has been keeping us waiting.' His striped dressing-gown, his

morning trousers, everything, down to his embroidered slippers, was correct and marvellously well cared for. His features, noble and vacuous, betokened a propriety and paucity of ideas, the ideal of the well-meaning man, a horror of the unexpected and of ridicule, an abundance of gravity.

Julien, to whom his Lieutenant of the 96th had explained that to keep him waiting so long, after rudely flinging his card in his face, was an additional insult, strode boldly into M. de Beauvoisis's presence. It was his intention to be insolent, but he wished at the same time to show his good breeding.

He was so much impressed by M. de Beauvoisis's gentle manners, by his air at once formal, important and self-satisfied, by the admirable elegance of his surroundings, that in a twinkling all thought of being insolent forsook him. This was not his man of the day before. So great was his astonishment at finding so distinguished a person in place of the vulgar fellow he had met in the cafe, that he could not think of a single word to say. He presented one of the cards that had been flung at him:

'This is my name,' said the man of fashion, in whom Julien's black coat, at seven o'clock in the morning, inspired but scant respect; 'but I do not understand, the honour . . .'

His way of pronouncing these last words restored some of Julien's ill humour.

'I have come to fight with you, Sir,' and he rapidly explained the situation.

M. Charles de Beauvoisis, after giving it careful thought, was quite satisfied with the cut of Julien's black coat. 'From Staub's, clearly,' he said to himself, listening to him in silence, 'that waistcoat is in good taste, the boots are right; but, on the other hand, that black coat in the early morning! . . . It will be to stop the bullet,' thought the Chevalier de Beauvoisis.

As soon as he had furnished himself with this explanation, he reverted to a perfect politeness, and addressed Julien almost as an equal. The discussion lasted for some time, it was a delicate matter; but in the end Julien could not reject the evidence of his own eyes. The well-bred young man whom he saw

before him bore no resemblance whatsoever to the rude person who, the day before, had insulted him.

Julien felt an invincible reluctance to go away, he prolonged the explanation. He observed the self-sufficiency of the Chevalier de Beauvoisis, for such was the style that he had adopted in referring to himself, shocked at Julien's addressing him as Monsieur, pure and simple.

He admired the other's gravity, blended with a certain modest fatuity but never discarded for a single instant. He was astonished by the curious way in which his tongue moved as he enunciated his words . . . But after all, in all this, there was not the slightest reason to pick a quarrel with him.

The young diplomat offered to fight with great courtesy, but the ex-Lieutenant of the 96th, who had been sitting for an hour with his legs apart, his hands on his hips and his arms akimbo, decided that his friend, M. Sorel, was not the sort of person to pick a quarrel, in the German fashion, with another man, because that man's visiting cards had been stolen.

Julien left the house in the worst of tempers. The Chevalier de Beauvoisis's carriage was waiting for him in the courtyard, in front of the steps; as it happened, Julien raised his eyes and recognised his man of the previous day in the coachman.

Seeing him, grasping him by the skirts of his coat, pulling him down from his box and belabouring him with his whip, were the work of a moment. Two lackeys tried to defend their fellow; Julien received a pummelling: immediately he drew one of his pocket pistols and fired at them; they took to their heels. It was all over in a minute.

The Chevalier de Beauvoisis came slowly downstairs with the most charming gravity, repeating in the accents of a great nobleman: 'What's this? What's this?' His curiosity was evidently aroused, but his diplomatic importance did not allow him to show any sign of interest. When he learned what the matter was, a lofty pride still struggled in his features against the slightly playful coolness which ought never to be absent from the face of a diplomat.

The Lieutenant of the 96th realised that M. de Beauvoisis was anxious to fight; he wished also, diplomatically enough, to preserve for his friend the advantages of the initiative. ‘This time,’ he cried, ‘there are grounds for a duel!’ ‘I should think so,’ replied the diplomat.

‘I dismiss that rascal,’ he said to his servants; ‘someone else must drive.’ They opened the carriage door: the Chevalier insisted that Julien and his second should get in before him. They went to find a friend of M. de Beauvoisis, who suggested a quiet spot. The conversation as they drove to it was perfect. The only odd thing was the diplomat in undress.

‘These gentlemen, although of the highest nobility,’ thought Julien, ‘are not in the least boring like the people who come to dine with M. de La Mole; and I can see why,’ he added a moment later, ‘they are not ashamed to be indecent.’ They were speaking of the dancers whom the public had applauded in a ballet of the previous evening. The gentlemen made allusions to spicy anecdotes of which Julien and his second, the Lieutenant of the 96th, were entirely ignorant. Julien did not make the mistake of pretending to know them; he admitted his ignorance with good grace. This frankness found favour with the Chevalier’s friend; he repeated the anecdotes to him in full detail, and extremely well.

One thing astonished Julien vastly. A station which was being erected in the middle of the street for the Corpus Christi day procession, held up the carriage for a moment. The gentlemen indulged in a number of pleasantries; the cure, according to them, was the son of an Archbishop. Never, in the house of the Marquis de La Mole, who hoped to become a Duke, would anyone have dared to say such a thing.

The duel was over in an instant: Julien received a bullet in his arm; they bound it up for him with handkerchiefs; these were soaked in brandy, and the Chevalier de Beauvoisis asked Julien most politely to allow him to take him home, in the carriage that had brought them. When Julien gave his address as the Hotel de La Mole, the young diplomat and his friend exchanged glances. Julien’s cab was waiting, but he found these gentlemen’s conversation infinitely more amusing than that of the worthy Lieutenant of the 96th.

‘Good God! A duel, is that all?’ thought Julien. ‘How fortunate I was to come across that coachman again! What a misfortune, if I had had to endure that insult a second time in a cafe!’ The amusing conversation had scarcely been interrupted. Julien now understood that the affectation of a diplomat does serve some purpose.

‘So dullness is by no means inherent,’ he said to himself, ‘in a conversation between people of high birth! These men make fun of the Corpus Christi day procession, they venture to repeat highly scabrous anecdotes, and with picturesque details. Positively the only thing lacking to them is judgment in politics, and this deficiency is more than made up for by the charm of their tone and the perfect aptness of their expressions.’ Julien felt himself keenly attracted to them. ‘How glad I should be to see them often!’

No sooner had they parted than the Chevalier de Beauvoisis hastened in search of information: what he heard was by no means promising.

He was extremely curious to know his man better; could he with decency call upon him? The scanty information he managed to obtain was not of an encouraging nature.

‘This is frightful!’ he said to his second. ‘It is impossible for me to admit that I have fought a duel with a mere secretary of M. de La Mole, and that because I have been robbed of my visiting cards by a coachman.’

‘Certainly the whole story leaves one exposed to ridicule.’

That evening, the Chevalier de Beauvoisis spread the report everywhere that this M. Sorel, who incidentally was a perfectly charming young man, was the natural son of an intimate friend of the Marquis de La Mole. The rumour passed without difficulty. As soon as it was established, the young diplomat and his friend deigned to pay Julien several visits, during the fortnight for which he was confined to his room. Julien confessed to them that he had never in his life been to the Opera.

‘This is terrible,’ they told him, ‘where else does one go? Your first outing must be to the Comte Ory.’

At the Opera, the Chevalier de Beauvoisis presented him to the famous singer Geronimo, who was enjoying an immense success that season.

Julien almost paid court to the Chevalier; his blend of self-respect, mysterious importance and boyish fatuity enchanted him. For instance, the Chevalier stammered slightly because he had the honour to be frequently in the company of a great nobleman who suffered from that infirmity. Never had Julien seen combined in a single person the absurdity which keeps one amused and the perfection of manners which a poor provincial must seek to copy.

He was seen at the Opera with the Chevalier de Beauvoisis; their association caused his name to be mentioned.

‘Well, Sir!’ M. de La Mole said to him one day, ‘and so you are the natural son of a rich gentleman of the Franche–Comte, my intimate friend!’

The Marquis cut Julien short when he tried to protest that he had in no way helped to give currency to this rumour.

‘M. de Beauvoisis did not wish to have fought a duel with a carpenter’s son.’

‘I know, I know,’ said M. de La Mole; ‘it rests with me now to give consistency to the story, which suits me. But I have one favour to ask you, which will cost you no more than half an hour of your time: every Opera evening, at half-past eleven, go and stand in the vestibule when the people of fashion are coming out. I still notice provincial mannerisms in you at times, you must get rid of them; besides, it can do you no harm to know, at least by sight, important personages to whom I may one day have occasion to send you. Call at the box office to have yourself identified; they have placed your name on the list.’

Chapter 7

An Attack of Gout

And I received promotion, not on my own merits, but because my master had the gout.

BERTOLOTTI

The reader is perhaps surprised at this free and almost friendly tone; we have forgotten to say that for six weeks the Marquis had been confined to the house by an attack of gout.

Mademoiselle de La Mole and her mother were at Hyeres, with the Marquise's mother. Comte Norbert saw his father only for brief moments; they were on the best of terms, but had nothing to say to one another. M. de La Mole, reduced to Julien's company, was astonished to find him endowed with ideas. He made him read the newspapers aloud. Soon the young secretary was able to select the interesting passages. There was a new paper which the Marquis abhorred; he had vowed that he would never read it, and spoke of it every day. Julien laughed. The Marquis, out of patience with the times, made Julien read him Livy; the translation improvised from the Latin text amused him.

One day the Marquis said, with that tone of over-elaborate politeness, which often tried Julien's patience:

'Allow me, my dear Sorel, to make you the present of a blue coat: when it suits you to put it on and to pay me a visit, you will be, in my eyes, the younger brother of the Comte de Chaulnes, that is to say, the son of my old friend the Duke.'

Julien was somewhat in the dark as to what was happening; that evening he ventured to pay a visit in his blue coat. The Marquis treated him as an equal. Julien had a heart capable of appreciating true politeness, but he had no idea of the finer shades. He would have sworn, before this caprice of the Marquis, that it would be impossible to be received by him with greater deference. 'What a marvellous talent!' Julien said to himself; when he rose to go, the Marquis apologised for not being able to see him to the door on account of his gout.

Julien was obsessed by this strange idea: 'Can he be laughing at me?' he wondered. He went to seek the advice of the abbe Pirard, who, less courteous than the Marquis, answered him only with a whistle and changed the subject. The following morning Julien appeared before the Marquis, in a black coat, with his portfolio and the letters to be signed. He was received in the old manner. That evening, in his blue coat, it was with an entirely different tone and one in every way as polite as the evening before.

'Since you appear to find some interest in the visits which you are so kind as to pay to a poor, suffering old man,' the Marquis said to him, 'you must speak to him of all the little incidents in your life, but openly, and without thinking of anything but how to relate them clearly and in an amusing fashion. For one must have amusement,' the Marquis went on; 'that is the only real thing in life. A man cannot save my life on a battle-field every day, nor can he make me every day the present of a million; but if I had Rivarol here, by my couch, every day, he would relieve me of an hour of pain and boredom. I saw a great deal of him at Hamburg, during the Emigration.'

And the Marquis told Julien stories of Rivarol among the Hamburgers, who would club together in fours to elucidate the point of a witty saying.

M. de La Mole, reduced to the society of this young cleric, sought to enliven him. He stung Julien's pride. Since he was asked for the truth, Julien determined to tell his whole story; but with the suppression of two things: his fanatical admiration for a name which made the Marquis furious, and his entire unbelief, which hardly became a future cure. His little affair with the Chevalier de Beauvoisis arrived most opportunely. The Marquis laughed till he cried at the scene in the cafe in the Rue Saint–Honore, with the coachman

who covered him with foul abuse. It was a period of perfect frankness in the relations between employer and protege.

M. de La Mole became interested in this singular character. At first, he played with Julien's absurdities, for his own entertainment; soon he found it more interesting to correct, in the gentlest manner, the young man's mistaken view of life. 'Most provincials who come to Paris admire everything,' thought the Marquis; 'this fellow hates everything. They have too much sentiment, he has not enough, and fools take him for a fool.'

The attack of gout was prolonged by the wintry weather and lasted for some months.

'One becomes attached to a fine spaniel,' the Marquis told himself; 'why am I so ashamed of becoming attached to this young cleric? He is original. I treat him like a son; well, what harm is there in that! This fancy, if it lasts, will cost me a diamond worth five hundred louis in my will.'

Once the Marquis had realised the firm character of his protege, he entrusted him with some fresh piece of business every day.

Julien noticed with alarm that this great nobleman would occasionally give him contradictory instructions with regard to the same matter.

This was liable to land him in serious trouble. Julien, when he came to work with the Marquis, invariably brought a diary in which he wrote down his instructions, and the Marquis initialled them. Julien had engaged a clerk who copied out the instructions relative to each piece of business in a special book. In this book were kept also copies of all letters.

This idea seemed at first the most ridiculous and tiresome thing imaginable. But, in less than two months, the Marquis realised its advantages. Julien suggested engaging a clerk from a bank, who should keep an account by double entry of all the revenue from and expenditure on the estates of which he himself had charge.

These measures so enlightened the Marquis as to his own financial position that he was able to give himself the pleasure of embarking on two or three

fresh speculations without the assistance of his broker, who had been robbing him.

‘Take three thousand francs for yourself,’ he said, one day to his young minister.

‘But, Sir, my conduct may be criticised.’

‘What do you want, then?’ replied the Marquis, with irritation.

‘I want you to be so kind as to make a formal agreement, and to write it down yourself in the book; the agreement will award me a sum of three thousand francs. Besides, it was M. l’abbe Pirard who first thought of all this book-keeping.’ The Marquis, with the bored expression of the Marquis de Moncade, listening to M. Poisson, his steward, reading his accounts, wrote out his instructions.

In the evening, when Julien appeared in his blue coat, there was never any talk of business. The Marquis’s kindness was so flattering to our hero’s easily wounded vanity that presently, in spite of himself, he felt a sort of attachment to this genial old man. Not that Julien was sensitive, as the word is understood in Paris; but he was not a monster, and no one, since the death of the old Surgeon–Major, had spoken to him so kindly. He remarked with astonishment that the Marquis showed a polite consideration for his self-esteem which he had never received from the old surgeon. Finally he realised that the surgeon had been prouder of his Cross than the Marquis was of his Blue Riband. The Marquis was the son of a great nobleman.

One day, at the end of a morning interview, in his black coat, and for the discussion of business, Julien amused the Marquis, who kept him for a couple of hours, and positively insisted upon giving him a handful of bank notes which his broker had just brought him from the Bourse.

‘I hope, Monsieur le Marquis, not to be wanting in the profound respect which I owe you if I ask you to allow me to say something.’

‘Speak, my friend.’

‘Will Monsieur le Marquis be graciously pleased to let me decline this gift. It is not to the man in black that it is offered, and it would at once put an end to the liberties which he is so kind as to tolerate from the man in blue.’ He bowed most respectfully, and left the room without looking round.

This attitude amused the Marquis, who reported it that evening to the abbe Pirard.

‘There is something that I must at last confess to you, my dear abbe. I know the truth about Julien’s birth, and I authorise you not to keep this confidence secret.

‘His behaviour this morning was noble,’ thought the Marquis, ‘and I shall ennoble him.’

Some time after this, the Marquis was at length able to leave his room.

‘Go and spend a couple of months in London,’ he told Julien. ‘The special couriers and other messengers will bring you the letters I receive, with my notes. You will write the replies and send them to me, enclosing each letter with its reply. I have calculated that the delay will not amount to more than five days.’

As he travelled post along the road to Calais, Julien thought with amazement of the futility of the alleged business on which he was being sent.

We shall not describe the feeling of horror, almost of hatred, with which he set foot on English soil. The reader is aware of his insane passion for Bonaparte. He saw in every officer a Sir Hudson Lowe, in every nobleman a Lord Bathurst, ordering the atrocities of Saint Helena, and receiving his reward in ten years of office.

In London he at last made acquaintance with the extremes of fatuity. He made friends with some young Russian gentlemen who initiated him.

‘You are predestined, my dear Sorel,’ they told him, ‘you are endowed by nature with that cold expression a thousand leagues from the sensation of the moment, which we try so hard to assume.’

‘You have not understood our age,’ Prince Korasoff said to him; ‘always do the opposite to what people expect of you. That, upon my honour, is the only religion of the day. Do not be either foolish or affected, for then people will expect foolishness and affectations, and you will not be obeying the rule.’

Julien covered himself with glory one day in the drawing-room of the Duke of Fitz–Fulke, who had invited him to dine, with Prince Korasoff. The party were kept waiting for an hour. The way in which Julien comported himself amid the score of persons who stood waiting is still quoted by the young Secretaries of Embassy in London. His expression was inimitable.

He was anxious to meet, notwithstanding his friends the dandies, the celebrated Philip Vane, the one philosopher that England has produced since Locke. He found him completing his seventh year in prison. ‘The aristocracy does not take things lightly in this country,’ thought Julien; ‘in addition to all this, Vane is disgraced, abused,’ etc.

Julien found him good company; the fury of the aristocracy kept him amused. ‘There,’ Julien said to himself, as he left the prison, ‘is the one cheerful man that I have met in England.’

‘The idea of most use to tyrants is that of God,’ Vane had said to him.

We suppress the rest of the philosopher’s system as being cynical.

On his return: ‘What amusing idea have you brought me from England?’ M. de La Mole asked him. He remained silent. ‘What idea have you brought, amusing or not?’ the Marquis went on, sharply.

‘First of all,’ said Julien, ‘the wisest man in England is mad for an hour daily; he is visited by the demon of suicide, who is the national deity.

‘Secondly, intelligence and genius forfeit twenty-five per cent of their value on landing in England.

‘Thirdly, nothing in the world is so beautiful, admirable, moving as the English countryside.’

‘Now, it is my turn,’ said the Marquis.

‘First of all, what made you say, at the ball at the Russian Embassy, that there are in France three hundred thousand young men of five and twenty who are passionately anxious for war? Do you think that that is quite polite to the Crowned Heads?’

‘One never knows what to say in speaking to our great diplomats,’ said Julien. They have a mania for starting serious discussions. If one confines oneself to the commonplaces of the newspapers, one is reckoned a fool. If one allows oneself to say something true and novel, they are astonished, they do not know how to answer, and next morning, at seven o’clock they send word to one by the First Secretary, that one has been impolite.’

‘Not bad,’ said the Marquis, with a laugh. ‘I wager, however, Master Philosopher, that you have not discovered what you went to England to do.’

‘Pardon me,’ replied Julien; ‘I went there to dine once a week with His Majesty’s Ambassador, who is the most courteous of men.’

‘You went to secure the Cross which is lying there’ the Marquis told him. ‘I do not wish to make you lay aside your black coat, and I have grown accustomed to the more amusing tone which I have adopted with the man in blue. Until further orders, understand this: when I see this Cross, you are the younger son of my friend the Duc de Chaulnes, who, without knowing it, has been for the last six months employed in diplomacy. Observe,’ added the Marquis, with a highly serious air, cutting short Julien’s expressions of gratitude, ‘that I do not on any account wish you to rise above your station. That is always a mistake, and a misfortune both for patron and for protege. When my lawsuits bore you, or when you no longer suit me I shall ask for a good living for you, like that of our friend the abbe Pirard, and nothing more,’ the Marquis added, in the driest of tones.

This Cross set Julien’s pride at rest; he began to talk far more freely. He felt himself less frequently insulted and made a butt by those remarks, susceptible of some scarcely polite interpretation, which, in the course of an animated conversation, may fall from the lips of anyone.

His Cross was the cause of an unexpected visit; this was from M. le Baron de Valenod, who came to Paris to thank the Minister for his Barony and to

come to an understanding with him. He was going to be appointed Mayor of Verrieres in the place of M. de Renal.

Julien was consumed with silent laughter when M. de Valenod gave him to understand that it had just been discovered that M de Renal was a Jacobin. The fact was that, in a new election which was in preparation, the new Baron was the ministerial candidate, and in the combined constituency of the Department, which in reality was strongly Ultra, it was M. de Renal who was being put forward by the Liberals.

It was in vain that Julien tried to learn something of Madame de Renal; the Baron appeared to remember their former rivalry, and was impenetrable. He ended by asking Julien for his father's vote at the coming election. Julien promised to write.

'You ought, Monsieur le Chevalier, to introduce me to M. le Marquis de La Mole.'

'Indeed, so I ought,' thought Julien; 'but a rascal like this!'

'To be frank,' he replied, 'I am too humble a person in the Hotel de La Mole to take it upon me to introduce anyone.'

Julien told the Marquis everything: that evening he informed him of Valenod's pretension, and gave an account of his life and actions since 1814.

'Not only,' M. de La Mole replied, with a serious air, 'will you introduce the new Baron to me tomorrow, but I shall invite him to dine the day after. He will be one of our new Prefects.'

'In that case,' retorted Julien coldly, 'I request the post of Governor of the Poorhouse for my father.'

'Excellent,' said the Marquis, recovering his gaiety; 'granted; I was expecting a sermon. You are growing up.'

M. de Valenod informed Julien that the keeper of the lottery office at Verrieres had just died; Julien thought it amusing to bestow this place upon M. de Cholin, the old imbecile whose petition he had picked up in the room

occupied there by M. de La Mole. The Marquis laughed heartily at the petition which Julien recited as he made him sign the letter applying for this post to the Minister of Finance.

No sooner had M. de Cholin been appointed than Julien learned that this post had been requested by the Deputies of the Department for M. Gros, the celebrated geometrician: this noble-hearted man had an income of only fourteen hundred francs, and every year had been lending six hundred francs to the late holder of the post, to help him to bring up his family.

Julien was astonished at the effect of what he had done. ‘It is nothing,’ he told himself; ‘I must be prepared for many other acts of injustice, if I am to succeed, and, what is more, must know how to conceal them, under a cloak of fine sentimental words: poor M, Gros! It is he that deserved the Cross, it is I that have it, and I must act according to the wishes of the Government that has given it to me.’

Chapter 8

What Is the Decoration that Confers Distinction?

Your water does not refresh me, said the thirsty genie. Yet it is the coolest well in all the Diar Bekir.

PELLICO

One day Julien returned from the charming property of Villequier, on the bank of the Seine, in which M. de La Mole took a special interest because, of all his estates, it was the only one that had belonged to the celebrated Boniface de La Mole. He found at the Hotel the Marquise and her daughter, who had returned from Hyeres.

Julien was now a dandy and understood the art of life in Paris. He greeted Mademoiselle de La Mole with perfect coolness. He appeared to remember nothing of the time when she asked him so gaily to tell her all about his way of falling from his horse.

Mademoiselle de La Mole found him taller and paler. There was no longer anything provincial about his figure or his attire; not so with his conversation: this was still perceptibly too serious, too positive. In spite of these sober qualities, and thanks to his pride, it conveyed no sense of inferiority; one felt merely that he still regarded too many things as important. But one saw that he was a man who would stand by his word.

‘He is wanting in lightness of touch, but not in intelligence,’ Mademoiselle de La Mole said to her father, as she teased him over the Cross he had given Julien. ‘My brother has been asking you for it for the last eighteen months, and he is a La Mole!’

‘Yes; but Julien has novelty. That has never been the case with the La Mole you mention.’

M. le Duc de Retz was announced.

Mathilde felt herself seized by an irresistible desire to yawn; she recognised the antique decorations and the old frequenters of the paternal drawing-room. She formed an entirely boring picture of the life she was going to resume in Paris. And yet at Hyeres she had longed for Paris.

‘To think that I am nineteen!’ she reflected: ‘it is the age of happiness, according to all those gilt-edged idiots.’ She looked at nine or ten volumes of recent poetry that had accumulated, during her absence in Provence, on the drawing-room table. It was her misfortune to have more intelligence than MM. de Croisenois, de Caylus, de Luz, and the rest of her friends. She could imagine everything that they would say to her about the beautiful sky in Provence, poetry, the south, etc., etc.

Those lovely eyes, in which was revealed the most profound boredom, and, what was worse still, a despair of finding any pleasure, came to rest upon Julien. At any rate, he was not exactly like all the rest.

‘Monsieur Sorel,’ she said in that short, sharp voice, with nothing feminine about it, which is used by young women of the highest rank, ‘Monsieur Sorel, are you coming to M. de Retz’s ball tonight?’

‘Mademoiselle, I have not had the honour to be presented to M. le Duc.’ (One would have said that these words and the title burned the lips of the proud provincial.)

‘He has asked my brother to bring you; and, if you came, you could tell me all about Villequier; there is some talk of our going there in the spring. I should like to know whether the house is habitable, and if the country round it is as pretty as people say. There are so many undeserved reputations!’

Julien made no reply.

‘Come to the ball with my brother,’ she added, in the driest of tones.

Julien made a respectful bow. ‘So, even in the middle of a ball, I must render accounts to all the members of the family. Am I not paid to be their man of business?’ In his ill humour, he added: ‘Heaven only knows whether what I tell the daughter may not upset the plans of her father, and brother, and mother! It is just like the court of a Sovereign Prince. One is expected to be a complete nonentity, and at the same time give no one any grounds for complaint.

‘How I dislike that great girl!’ he thought, as he watched Mademoiselle de La Mole cross the room, her mother having called her to introduce her to a number of women visitors. ‘She overdoes all the fashions, her gown is falling off her shoulders . . . she is even paler than when she went away . . . What colourless hair, if that is what they call golden! You would say the light shone through it. How arrogant her way of bowing, of looking at people! What regal gestures!’

Mademoiselle de La Mole had called her brother back, as he was leaving the room.

Comte Norbert came up to Julien:

‘My dear Sorel,’ he began, ‘where would you like me to call for you at midnight for M. de Retz’s ball? He told me particularly to bring you.’

‘I know to whom I am indebted for such kindness,’ replied Julien, bowing to the ground.

His ill humour, having no fault to find with the tone of politeness, indeed of personal interest, in which Norbert had addressed him, vented itself upon the reply which he himself had made to this friendly speech. He detected a trace of servility in it.

That night, on arriving at the ball, he was struck by the magnificence of the Hotel de Retz. The courtyard was covered with an immense crimson awning patterned with golden stars: nothing could have been more elegant. Beneath this awning, the court was transformed into a grove of orange trees and oleanders in blossom. As their tubs had been carefully buried at a sufficient

depth, these oleanders and orange trees seemed to be springing from the ground. The carriage drive had been sprinkled with sand.

The general effect seemed extraordinary to our provincial. He had no idea that such magnificence could exist; in an instant his imagination had taken wings and flown a thousand leagues away from ill humour. In the carriage, on their way to the ball, Norbert had been happy, and he had seen everything in dark colours; as soon as they entered the courtyard their moods were reversed.

Norbert was conscious only of certain details, which, in the midst of all this magnificence, had been overlooked. He reckoned up the cost of everything, and as he arrived at a high total, Julien remarked that he appeared almost jealous of the outlay and began to sulk.

As for Julien, he arrived spell-bound with admiration, and almost timid with excess of emotion in the first of the saloons in which the company were dancing. Everyone was making for the door of the second room, and the throng was so great that he found it impossible to move. This great saloon was decorated to represent the Alhambra of Granada.

‘She is the belle of the ball, no doubt about it,’ said a young man with moustaches, whose shoulder dug into Julien’s chest.

‘Mademoiselle Fourmont, who has been the reigning beauty all winter,’ his companion rejoined, ‘sees that she must now take the second place: look how strangely she is frowning.’

‘Indeed she is hoisting all her canvas to attract. Look, look at that gracious smile as soon as she steps into the middle in that country dance. It is inimitable, upon my honour.’

‘Mademoiselle de La Mole has the air of being in full control of the pleasure she derives from her triumph, of which she is very well aware. One would say that she was afraid of attracting whoever speaks to her.’

‘Precisely! That is the art of seduction.’

Julien was making vain efforts to catch a glimpse of this seductive woman; seven or eight men taller than himself prevented him from seeing her.

‘There is a good deal of coquetry in that noble reserve,’ went on the young man with the moustaches.

‘And those big blue eyes which droop so slowly just at the moment when one would say they were going to give her away,’ his companion added. ‘Faith, she’s a past master.’

‘Look how common the fair Fourmont appears beside her,’ said a third.

‘That air of reserve is as much as to say: “How charming I should make myself to you, if you were the man that was worthy of me.”’

‘And who could be worthy of the sublime Mathilde?’ said the first: ‘Some reigning Prince, handsome, clever, well made, a hero in battle, and aged twenty at the most.’

‘The natural son of the Emperor of Russia, for whom, on the occasion of such a marriage, a Kingdom would be created; or simply the Comte de Thaler, with his air of a peasant in his Sunday clothes . . .’

The passage was now cleared, Julien was free to enter.

‘Since she appears so remarkable in the eyes of these puppets, it is worth my while to study her,’ he thought. ‘I shall understand what perfection means to these people.’

As he was trying to catch her eye, Mathilde looked at him. ‘Duty calls me,’ Julien said to himself, but his resentment was now confined to his expression. Curiosity made him step forward with a pleasure which the low cut of the gown on Mathilda’s shoulders rapidly enhanced, in a manner, it must be admitted, by no means flattering to his self-esteem. ‘Her beauty has the charm of youth,’ he thought. Five or six young men, among whom Julien recognised those whom he had heard talking in the doorway, stood between her and him.

‘You can tell me, Sir, as you have been here all the winter,’ she said to him, ‘is it not true that this is the prettiest ball of the season?’ He made no answer.

‘This Coulon quadrille seems to me admirable; and the ladies are dancing it quite perfectly.’ The young men turned round to see who the fortunate person was who was being thus pressed for an answer. It was not encouraging.

‘I should hardly be a good judge, Mademoiselle; I spend my time writing: this is the first ball on such a scale that I have seen.’

The moustached young men were shocked.

‘You are a sage, Monsieur Sorel,’ she went on with a more marked interest; ‘you look upon all these balls, all these parties, like a philosopher, like a Jean–Jacques Rousseau. These follies surprise you without tempting you.’

A chance word had stifled Julien’s imagination and banished every illusion from his heart. His lips assumed an expression of disdain that was perhaps slightly exaggerated.

‘Jean–Jacques Rousseau,’ he replied, ‘is nothing but a fool in my eyes when he takes it upon himself to criticise society; he did not understand it, and approached it with the heart of an upstart flunkey.’

‘He wrote the Contrat Social,’ said Mathilde in a tone of veneration.

‘For all his preaching a Republic and the overthrow of monarchical titles, the upstart is mad with joy if a Duke alters the course of his after-dinner stroll to accompany one of his friends.’

‘Ah, yes! The Due de Luxembourg at Montmorency accompanies a M. Coindet on the road to Paris,’ replied Mademoiselle de La Mole with the impetuous delight of a first enjoyment of pedantry. She was overjoyed at her own learning, almost like the Academician who discovered the existence of King Feretrius. Julien’s eye remained penetrating and stern. Mathilde had felt a momentary enthusiasm; her partner’s coldness disconcerted her profoundly. She was all the more astonished inasmuch as it was she who was in the habit of producing this effect upon other people.

At that moment, the Marquis de Croisenois advanced eagerly towards Mademoiselle de La Mole. He stopped for a moment within a few feet of her, unable to approach her on account of the crowd. He looked at her, with a smile at the obstacle. The young Marquise de Rouvray was close beside him; she was a cousin of Mathilde. She gave her arm to her husband, who had been married for only a fortnight. The Marquis de Rouvray, who was quite young also, showed all that fatuous love which seizes a man, who having made a 'suitable' marriage entirely arranged by the family lawyers, finds that he has a perfectly charming spouse. M. de Rouvray would be a Duke on the death of an uncle of advanced years.

While the Marquis de Croisenois, unable to penetrate the throng, stood gazing at Mathilde with a smiling air, she allowed her large, sky-blue eyes to rest upon him and his neighbours. 'What could be duller,' she said to herself, 'than all that group! Look at Croisenois who hopes to marry me; he is nice and polite, he has perfect manners like M. de Rouvray. If they did not bore me, these gentlemen would be quite charming. He, too, will come to balls with me with that smug, satisfied air. A year after we are married, my carriage, my horses, my gowns, my country house twenty leagues from Paris, everything will be as perfect as possible, just what is needed to make an upstart burst with envy, a Comtesse de Roiville for instance; and after that?

Mathilde let her mind drift into the future. The Marquis de Croisenois succeeded in reaching her, and spoke to her, but she dreamed on without listening. The sound of his voice was lost in the hubbub of the ball. Her eye mechanically followed Julien, who had moved away with a respectful, but proud and discontented air. She saw in a corner, aloof from the moving crowd, Conte Altamira, who was under sentence of death in his own country, as the reader already knows. Under Louis XIV, a lady of his family had married a Prince de Conti; this antecedent protected him to some extent from the police of the Congregation.

'I can see nothing but a sentence of death that distinguishes a man,' thought Mathilde: 'it is the only thing that is not to be bought.

'Ah! There is a witty saying that I have wasted on myself! What a pity that it did not occur to me when I could have made the most of it!' Mathilde had

too much taste to lead up in conversation to a witticism prepared beforehand; but she had also too much vanity not to be delighted with her own wit. An air of happiness succeeded the appearance of boredom in her face. The Marquis de Croisenois, who was still addressing her, thought he saw a chance of success, and doubled his loquacity.

'What fault would anyone have to find with my remark?' Mathilde asked herself. 'I should answer my critic: "A title of Baron, or Viscount, that can be bought; a Cross, that is given; my brother has just had one, what has he ever done? A step in promotion, that is obtained. Ten years of garrison duty, or a relative as Minister for War, and one becomes a squadron-commander, like Norbert. A great fortune! That is still the most difficult thing to secure, and therefore the most meritorious. Now is not that odd? It is just the opposite to what all the books say . .. Well, to secure a fortune, one marries M. Rothschild's daughter."

'My remark is really subtle. A death sentence is still the only thing for which no one has ever thought of asking.

'Do you know Conte Altamira?' she asked M. de Croisenois.

She had the air of having come back to earth from so remote an abstraction, and this question bore so little relation to all that the poor Marquis had been saying to her for the last five minutes, that his friendly feelings were somewhat disconcerted. He was, however, a man of ready wit, and highly esteemed in that capacity.

'Mathilde is certainly odd,' he thought; 'it is a drawback, but she gives her husband such a splendid social position! I cannot think how the Marquis de La Mole manages it; he is on intimate terms with the best people in every party, he is a man who cannot fall. Besides, this oddity in Mathilde may pass for genius. Given noble birth and an ample fortune, genius is not to be laughed at, and then, what distinction! She has such a command, too, when she pleases, of that combination of wit, character and aptness, which makes conversation perfect. ..' As it is hard to do two things well at the same time, the Marquis answered Mathilde with a vacant air, and as though repeating a lesson:

‘Who does not know poor Altamira?’ and he told her the story of the absurd, abortive conspiracy.

‘Most absurd!’ said Mathilde, as though speaking to herself, ‘but he has done something. I wish to see a man; bring him to me,’ she said to the Marquis, who was deeply shocked.

Conte Altamira was one of the most openly professed admirers of the haughty and almost impertinent air of Mademoiselle de La Mole; she was, according to him, one of the loveliest creatures in Paris.

‘How beautiful she would be on a throne!’ he said to M. de Croisenois, and made no difficulty about allowing himself to be led to her.

There are not wanting in society people who seek to establish the principle that nothing is in such bad tone as a conspiracy; it reeks of Jacobinism. And what can be more vile than an unsuccessful Jacobin?

Mathilde’s glance derided Altamira’s Liberalism to M. de Croisenois, but she listened to him with pleasure.

‘A conspirator at a ball, it is a charming contrast,’ she thought. In this conspirator, with his black moustaches, she detected a resemblance to a lion in repose; but she soon found that his mind had but one attitude: utility, admiration for utility.

Excepting only what might bring to his country Two Chamber government, the young Count felt that nothing was worthy of his attention. He parted from Mathilde, the most attractive person at the ball, with pleasure because he had seen a Peruvian General enter the room.

Despairing of Europe, poor Altamira had been reduced to hoping that, when the States of South America became strong and powerful, they might restore to Europe the freedom which Mirabeau had sent to them.†

† This page, written on July 25, 1830, was printed on August 4. (Publisher’s note.) — Le Rouge et le Noir was published in 1831. It was an order of July 25, 1830, dissolving the Chamber, which provoked the Revolution of the

following days, the abdication of Charles X, and the accession of Louis–Phillippe — C. K. S. M.]

A swarm of young men with moustaches had gathered round Mathilde. She had seen quite well that Altamira was not attracted, and felt piqued by his desertion of her; she saw his dark eye gleam as he spoke to the Peruvian General. Mademoiselle de La Mole studied the young Frenchmen with that profound seriousness which none of her rivals was able to imitate. ‘Which of them,’ she thought, ‘could ever be sentenced to death, even allowing him the most favourable conditions?’

This singular gaze flattered those who had little intelligence, but disturbed the rest. They feared the explosion of some pointed witticism which it would be difficult to answer.

‘Good birth gives a man a hundred qualities the absence of which would offend me: I see that in Julien’s case,’ thought Mathilde; ‘but it destroys those qualities of the spirit which make people be sentenced to death.’

At that moment someone remarked in her hearing: ‘That Conte Altamira is the second son of the Principe di San Nazaro–Pimentel; it was a Pimentel who attempted to save Conradin, beheaded in 1268. They are one of the noblest families of Naples.’

‘There,’ Mathilde said to herself, ‘is an excellent proof of my maxim: Good birth destroys the strength of character without which people do not incur sentences of death. I seem fated to go wrong this evening. Since I am only a woman like any other, well, I must dance.’ She yielded to the persistence of the Marquis de Croisenois, who for the last hour had been pleading for a galop. To distract her thoughts from her philosophical failure, Mathilde chose to be perfectly bewitching; M. de Croisenois was in ecstasies.

But not the dance, nor the desire to please one of the handsomest men at court, nothing could distract Mathilde. She could not possibly have enjoyed a greater triumph. She was the queen of the ball, she knew it, but she remained cold.

‘What a colourless life I shall lead with a creature like Croisenois,’ she said to herself, as he led her back to her place an hour later . . . ‘What pleasure can there be for me,’ she went on sadly, ‘if after an absence of six months, I do not find any in a ball which is the envy of all the women in Paris? And moreover I am surrounded by the homage of a society which could not conceivably be more select. There is no plebeian element here except a few peers and a Julien or two perhaps. And yet,’ she added, with a growing melancholy, ‘what advantages has not fate bestowed on me! Birth, wealth, youth! Everything, alas, but happiness.

‘The most dubious of my advantages are those of which they have been telling me all evening. Wit, I know I have, for obviously I frighten them all. If they venture to broach a serious subject, after five minutes of conversation they all arrive out of breath, and as though making a great discovery, at something which I have been repeating to them for the last hour. I am beautiful, I have that advantage for which Madame de Stael would have sacrificed everything, and yet the fact remains that I am dying of boredom. Is there any reason why I should be less bored when I have changed my name to that of the Marquis de Croisenois?

‘But, Lord!’ she added, almost in tears, ‘is he not a perfect man? He is the masterpiece of the education of the age; one cannot look at him without his thinking of something pleasant, and even clever, to say to one; he is brave . . . But that Sorel is a strange fellow,’ she said to herself, and the look of gloom in her eye gave place to a look of anger. ‘I told him that I had something to say to him, and he does not condescend to return!’

Chapter 9

The Ball

The splendour of the dresses, the blaze of the candles, the perfumes; all those rounded arms, and fine shoulders; bouquets, the sound of Rossini's music, pictures by Ciceri! I am beside myself!

Travels of Uzeri

'You are feeling cross,' the Marquise de La Mole said to her; 'I warn you, that is not good manners at a ball.'

'It is only a headache,' replied Mathilde contemptuously, 'it is too hot in here.'

At that moment, as though to corroborate Mademoiselle de La Mole, the old Baron de Tolly fainted and fell to the ground; he had to be carried out. There was talk of apoplexy, it was a disagreeable incident.

Mathilde did not give it a thought. It was one of her definite habits never to look at an old man or at anyone known to be given to talking about sad things.

She danced to escape the conversation about the apoplexy, which was nothing of the sort, for a day or two later the Baron reappeared.

'But M. Sorel does not appear,' she said to herself again after she had finished dancing. She was almost searching for him with her eyes when she caught sight of him in another room. Strange to say, he seemed to have shed

the tone of impassive coldness which was so natural to him; he had no longer the air of an Englishman.

‘He is talking to Conte Altamira, my condemned man!’ Mathilde said to herself. ‘His eye is ablaze with a sombre fire; he has the air of a Prince in disguise; the arrogance of his gaze has increased.’

Julien was coming towards the spot where she was, still talking to Altamira; she looked fixedly at him, studying his features in search of those lofty qualities which may entitle a man to the honour of being sentenced to death.

As he passed by her:

‘Yes,’ he was saying to Conte Altamira, ‘Danton was a man!’

‘Oh, heavens! Is he to be another Danton,’ thought Mathilde; ‘but he has such a noble face, and that Danton was so horribly ugly, a butcher, I fancy.’ Julien was still quite near her, she had no hesitation in calling to him; she was conscious and proud of asking a question that was extraordinary, coming from a girl.

‘Was not Danton a butcher?’ she asked him.

‘Yes, in the eyes of certain people,’ Julien answered her with an expression of the most ill-concealed scorn, his eye still ablaze from his conversation with Altamira, ‘but unfortunately for people of birth, he was a lawyer at Mery-sur-Seine; that is to say, Mademoiselle,’ he went on with an air of sarcasm, ‘that he began life like several of the Peers whom I see here this evening. It is true that Danton had an enormous disadvantage in the eyes of beauty: he was extremely ugly.’

The last words were uttered rapidly, with an extraordinary and certainly far from courteous air.

Julien waited for a moment, bowing slightly from the waist and with an arrogantly humble air. He seemed to be saying: ‘I am paid to answer you, and I live upon my pay.’ He did not deign to raise his eyes to her face. She, with her fine eyes opened extraordinarily wide and fastened upon him, seemed like his slave. At length, as the silence continued, he looked at her as

a servant looks at his master, when receiving orders. Although his eyes looked full into those of Mathilde, still fastened upon him with a strange gaze, he withdrew with marked alacrity.

‘That he, who really is so handsome,’ Mathilde said to herself at length, awakening from her dreams, ‘should pay such a tribute to ugliness! Never a thought of himself! He is not like Caylus or Croisenois. This Sorel has something of the air my father adopts when he is playing the Napoleon, at a ball.’ She had entirely forgotten Danton. ‘No doubt about it, I am bored this evening.’ She seized her brother by the arm, and, greatly to his disgust, forced him to take her for a tour of the rooms. The idea occurred to her of following the condemned man’s conversation with Julien.

The crowd was immense. She succeeded, however, in overtaking them at the moment when, just in front of her, Altamira had stopped by a tray of ices to help himself. He was talking to Julien, half turning towards him. He saw an arm in a braided sleeve stretched out to take an ice from the same tray. The gold lace seemed to attract his attention; he turned round bodily to see whose this arm was. Immediately his eyes, so noble and unaffected, assumed a slight expression of scorn.

‘You see that man,’ he murmured to Julien; ‘he is the Principe d’Araceli, the —— Ambassador. This morning he applied for my extradition to your French Foreign Minister, M. de Nerval. Look, there he is over there, playing whist. M. de Nerval is quite ready to give me up, for we gave you back two or three conspirators in 1816. If they surrender me to my King I shall be hanged within twenty-four hours. And it will be one of those pretty gentlemen with moustaches who will seize me.’

‘The wretches!’ exclaimed Julien, half aloud.

Mathilde did not lose a syllable of their conversation. Her boredom had vanished.

‘Not such wretches as all that,’ replied Conte Altamira. ‘I have spoken to you of myself to impress you with a real instance. Look at Principe d’Araceli; every five minutes he casts a glance at his Golden Fleece; he cannot get over the pleasure of seeing that trinket on his breast. The poor

man is really nothing worse than an anachronism. A hundred years ago, the Golden Fleece was a signal honour, but then it would have been far above his head. Today, among people of breeding, one must be an Araceli to be thrilled by it. He would have hanged a whole town to obtain it.'

'Was that the price he paid for it?' said Julien, with anxiety.

'Not exactly,' replied Altamira coldly; 'he perhaps had some thirty wealthy landowners of his country, who were supposed to be Liberals, flung into the river.'

'What a monster!' said Julien again.

Mademoiselle de La Mole, leaning forward with the keenest interest, was so close to him that her beautiful hair almost brushed his shoulder.

'You are very young!' replied Altamira. 'I told you that I have a married sister in Provence; she is still pretty, good, gentle; she is an excellent mother, faithful to all her duties, pious without bigotry.'

'What is he leading up to?' thought Mademoiselle de La Mole.

'She is happy,' Conte Altamira continued; 'she was happy in 1815. At that time I was in hiding there, on her property near Antibes; well, as soon as she heard of the execution of Marshal Ney, she began to dance!'

'Is it possible?' said the horrified Julien.

'It is the partisan spirit,' replied Altamira. There are no longer any genuine passions in the nineteenth century; that is why people are so bored in France. We commit the greatest cruelties, but without cruelty.'

'All the worse!' said Julien; 'at least, when we commit crimes, we should commit them with pleasure: that is the only good thing about them, and the only excuse that can in any way justify them.'

Mademoiselle de La Mole, entirely forgetting what she owed to herself, had placed herself almost bodily between Altamira and Julien. Her brother, upon whose arm she leaned, being accustomed to obey her, was looking about the

room, and, to hide his lack of composure, pretending to be held up by the crowd.

‘You are right,’ said Altamira; ‘we do everything without pleasure and without remembering it afterwards, even our crimes. I can point out to you at this ball ten men, perhaps, who will be damned as murderers. They have forgotten it, and the world also.†

† ‘A malcontent is speaking.’ (Note by Moliere to Tartuffe.)]

‘Many of them are moved to tears if their dog breaks its paw. At Pere–Lachaise, when people strew flowers on their graves, as you so charmingly say in Paris, we are told that they combined all the virtues of the knights of old, and we hear of the great deeds of their ancestor who lived in the days of Henri IV: If, despite the good offices of Principe d’Araceli, I am not hanged, and if I ever come to enjoy my fortune in Paris, I hope to invite you to dine with nine or ten murderers who are honoured and feel no remorse.

‘You and I, at that dinner, will be the only two whose hands are free from blood, but I shall be despised and almost hated, as a bloody and Jacobinical monster, and you will simply be despised as a plebeian who has thrust his way into good society.’

‘Nothing could be more true,’ said Mademoiselle de La Mole.

Altamira looked at her in astonishment; Julien did not deign to look at her.

‘Note that the revolution at the head of which I found myself,’ Conte Altamira went on, ‘was unsuccessful, solely because I would not cut off three heads, and distribute among our supporters seven or eight millions which happened to be in a safe of which I held the key. My King, who is now burning to have me hanged, and who, before the revolt, used to address me as tu, would have given me the Grand Cordon of his Order if I had cut off those three heads and distributed the money in those safes: for then I should have scored at least a partial success, and my country would have had a Charter of sorts . . . Such is the way of the world, it is a game of chess.’

‘Then,’ replied Julien, his eyes ablaze, ‘you did not know the game; now . . .’

‘I should cut off the heads, you mean, and I should not be a Girondin as you gave me to understand the other day? I will answer you,’ said Altamira sadly, ‘when you have killed a man in a duel, and that is a great deal less unpleasant than having him put to death by a headsman.’

‘Faith!’ said Julien, ‘the end justifies the means; if, instead of being a mere atom, I had any power, I would hang three men to save the lives of four.’

His eyes expressed the fire of conscience and a contempt for the vain judgments of men; they met those of Mademoiselle de La Mole who stood close beside him, and this contempt, instead of changing into an air of gracious civility, seemed to intensify.

It shocked her profoundly; but it no longer lay in her power to forget Julien; she moved indifferently away, taking her brother with her.

‘I must take some punch, and dance a great deal,’ she said to herself, ‘I intend to take the best that is going, and to create an effect at all costs. Good, here comes that master of impertinence, the Comte de Fervaques.’ She accepted his invitation; they danced. ‘It remains to be seen,’ she thought, ‘which of us will be the more impertinent, but, to get the full enjoyment out of him, I must make him talk.’ Presently all the rest of the country dance became a pure formality. No one was willing to miss any of Mathilde’s piquant repartees. M. de Fervaques grew troubled, and, being able to think of nothing but elegant phrases, in place of ideas, began to smirk; Mathilde, who was out of temper, treated him cruelly, and made an enemy of him. She danced until daybreak, and finally went home horribly tired. But, in the carriage, the little strength that remained to her was still employed in making her melancholy and wretched. She had been scorned by Julien, and was unable to scorn him.

Julien was on a pinnacle of happiness. Carried away unconsciously by the music, the flowers, the beautiful women, the general elegance, and, most of all, by his own imagination, which dreamed of distinctions for himself and of liberty for mankind:

‘What a fine ball!’ he said to the Conte, ‘nothing is lacking.’

‘Thought is lacking,’ replied Altamira.

And his features betrayed that contempt which is all the more striking because one sees that politeness makes it a duty to conceal it.

‘You are here, Monsieur le Comte. Is not that thought, and actively conspiring, too?’

‘I am here because of my name. But they hate thought in your drawing-rooms. It must never rise above the level of a comic song: then it is rewarded. But the man who thinks, if he shows energy and novelty in his sallies, you call a cynic. Is not that the name that one of your judges bestowed upon Courier? You put him in prison, and Beranger also. Everything that is of any value among you, intellectually, the Congregation flings to the criminal police; and society applauds.

‘The truth is that your antiquated society values conventionality above everything .. . You will never rise higher than martial gallantry; you will have Murats, but never a Washington. I can see nothing in France but vanity. A man who thinks of things as he speaks may easily say something rash, and his host then imagines himself insulted.’

At this point, the Conte’s carriage, which was taking Julien home, stopped at the Hotel de La Mole. Julien was in love with his conspirator. Altamira had paid him a handsome compliment, evidently springing from a profound conviction: ‘You have not the French frivolity, and you understand the principle of utility.’ It so happened that, only two evenings before, Julien had seen Marino Faliero, a tragedy by M. Casimir Delavigne.

‘Has not Israel Bertuccio more character than all those Venetian nobles?’ our rebellious plebeian asked himself; ‘and yet they are men whose noble descent can be proved as far back as the year 700, a century before Charlemagne; whereas the bluest blood at M. de Retz’s ball tonight does not go farther back, and that only by a hop, skip and jump, than the thirteenth century. Very well! Among those Venetian nobles, so great by birth, it is Israel Bertuccio that one remembers.

‘A conspiracy wipes out all the titles conferred by social caprice. In those conditions, a man springs at once to the rank which his manner of facing death assigns to him. The mind itself loses some of its authority . . .

‘What would Danton be today, in this age of Valenods and Renais? Not even a Deputy Crown Prosecutor .. .

‘What am I saying? He would have sold himself to the Congregation; he would be a Minister, for after all the great Danton did steal. Mirabeau, too, sold himself. Napoleon stole millions in Italy, otherwise he would have been brought to a standstill by poverty, like Pichegru. Only La Fayette never stole. Must one steal, must one sell oneself?’ Julien wondered. The question arrested the flow of his imagination. He spent the rest of the night reading the history of the Revolution.

Next day, as he copied his letters in the library, he could still think of nothing but Conte Altamira’s conversation.

‘It is quite true,’ he said to himself, after a long spell of absorption; ‘if those Spanish Liberals had compromised the people by a few crimes, they would not have been swept away so easily. They were conceited, chattering boys . . . like myself!’ Julien suddenly cried, as though awaking with a bound.

‘What difficult thing have I ever done that gives me the right to judge poor devils who, after all, once in their lives, have dared, have begun to act? I am like a man who, on rising from table, exclaims: “Tomorrow I shall not dine; that will not prevent me from feeling strong and brisk as I do today.” How can I tell what people feel in the middle of a great action? .. .’ These lofty thoughts were interrupted by the sudden arrival of Mademoiselle de La Mole, who at this moment entered the library. He was so excited by his admiration for the great qualities of Danton, Mirabeau, Carnot, who had contrived not to be crushed, that his eyes rested upon Mademoiselle de La Mole, but without his thinking of her, without his greeting her, almost without his seeing her. When at length his great staring eyes became aware of her presence, the light died out in them. Mademoiselle de La Mole remarked this with a feeling of bitterness.

In vain did she ask him for a volume of Vely's Histoire de France which stood on the highest shelf, so that Julien was obliged to fetch the longer of the two ladders. He brought the ladder; he found the volume, he handed it to her, still without being able to think of her. As he carried back the ladder, in his preoccupation, his elbow struck one of the glass panes protecting the shelves; the sound of the splinters falling on the floor at length aroused him. He hastened to make his apology to Mademoiselle de La Mole; he tried to be polite, but he was nothing more. Mathilde saw quite plainly that she had disturbed him, that he would have preferred to dream of what had been occupying his mind before her entry, rather than to talk to her. After a long glance at him, she slowly left the room. Julien watched her as she went. He enjoyed the contrast between the simplicity of the attire she was now wearing and her sumptuous magnificence overnight. The difference in her physiognomy was hardly less striking. This girl, so haughty at the Duc de Retz's ball, had at this moment almost a suppliant look. 'Really,' Julien told himself, 'that black gown shows off the beauty of her figure better than anything; but why is she in mourning?

'If I ask anyone the reason of this mourning, I shall only make myself appear a fool as usual.' Julien had quite come to earth from the soaring flight of his enthusiasm. 'I must read over all the letters I have written today; Heaven knows how many missing words and blunders I shall find.' As he was reading with forced attention the first of these letters, he heard close beside him the rustle of a silken gown; he turned sharply round; Mademoiselle de La Mole was standing by his table, and smiling. This second interruption made Julien lose his temper.

As for Mathilde, she had just become vividly aware that she meant nothing to this young man; her smile was intended to cover her embarrassment, and proved successful.

'Evidently, you are thinking about something that is extremely interesting, Monsieur Sorel. Is it by any chance some curious anecdote of the conspiracy that has sent the Conte Altamira here to Paris? Tell me what it is? I am burning to know; I shall be discreet, I swear to you!' This last sentence astonished her as she uttered it. What, she was pleading with a subordinate! Her embarrassment grew, she adopted a light manner:

‘What can suddenly have turned you, who are ordinarily so cold, into an inspired creature, a sort of Michelangelo prophet?’

This bold and indiscreet question, cutting Julien to the quick, revived all his passion.

‘Was Danton justified in stealing?’ he said to her sharply, and with an air that grew more and more savage. ‘The Revolutionaries of Piedmont, of Spain, ought they to have compromised the people by crimes? To have given away, even to men without merit, all the commands in the army, all the Crosses? Would not the men who wore those Crosses have had reason to fear a Restoration of their King? Ought they to have let the Treasury in Turin be pillaged? In a word, Mademoiselle,’ he said, as he came towards her with a terrible air, ‘ought the man who seeks to banish ignorance and crime from the earth to pass like a whirlwind and do evil as though blindly?’

Mathilde was afraid, she could not meet his gaze, and recoiled a little. She looked at him for a moment; then, ashamed of her fear, with a light step left the library.

Chapter 10

Queen Marguerite

Love! In what folly do you not contrive to make us find pleasure?

Letters of a Portuguese Nun

Julien read over his letters. When the dinner bell sounded: ‘How ridiculous I must have appeared in the eyes of that Parisian doll!’ he said to himself; ‘what madness to tell her what was really in my thoughts! And yet perhaps not so very mad. The truth on this occasion was worthy of me.

‘Why, too, come and cross-examine me on private matters? Her question was indiscreet. She forgot herself. My thoughts on Danton form no part of the sacrifice for which her father pays me.’

On reaching the dining-room, Julien was distracted from his ill humour by Mademoiselle de La Mole’s deep mourning, which was all the more striking since none of the rest of the family was in black.

After dinner, he found himself entirely recovered from the fit of enthusiasm which had possessed him all day. Fortunately, the Academician who knew Latin was present at dinner. There is the man who will be least contemptuous of me, if, as I suppose, my question about Mademoiselle de La Mole’s mourning should prove a blunder.’

Mathilde was looking at him with a singular expression. ‘There we have an instance of the coquetry of the women of these parts, just as Madame de Renal described it to me,’ Julien told himself. ‘I was not agreeable to her this morning, I did not yield to her impulse for conversation. My value has

increased in her eyes. No doubt the devil loses no opportunity there. Later on, her proud scorn will find out a way of avenging itself. Let her do her worst. How different from the woman I have lost! What natural charm! What simplicity! I knew what was in her mind before she did; I could see her thoughts take shape; I had no competitor, in her heart, but the fear of losing her children; it was a reasonable and natural affection, indeed it was pleasant for me who felt the same fear. I was a fool. The ideas that I had I formed of Paris prevented me from appreciating that sublime woman.

'What a difference, great God! And what do I find here? A sere and haughty vanity, all the refinements of self-esteem and nothing more.'

The party left the table. 'I must not let my Academician be intercepted,' said Julien. He went up to him as they were moving into the garden, assumed a meek, submissive air, and sympathised with his rage at the success of Hernani.

'If only we lived in the days of lettres de cachet!' he said.

'Ah, then he would never have dared,' cried the Academician, with a gesture worthy of Talma.

In speaking of a flower, Julien quoted a line or two from Virgil's Georgics, and decided that nothing came up to the poetry of the abbe Delille. In short, he flattered the Academician in every possible way. After which, with an air of the utmost indifference: 'I suppose,' he said to him, 'that Mademoiselle de La Mole has received a legacy from some uncle for whom she is in mourning.'

'What! You live in the house,' said the Academician, coming to a standstill, 'and you don't know her mania? Indeed, it is strange that her mother allows such things; but, between you and me, it is not exactly by strength of character that they shine in this family. Mademoiselle Mathilde has enough for them all, and leads them by the nose. Today is the 3Oth of April!' and the Academician broke off, looking at Julien, with an air of connivance. Julien smiled as intelligently as he was able.

‘What connection can there be between leading a whole household by the nose, wearing black and the 30th of April?’ he asked himself. ‘I must be even stupider than I thought.

‘I must confess to you,’ he said to the Academician, and his eye continued the question.

‘Let us take a turn in the garden,’ said the Academician, delighted to see this chance of delivering a long and formal speech. ‘What! Is it really possible that you do not know what happened on the 30th of April, 1574?’

‘Where?’ asked Julien, in surprise.

‘On the Place de Greve.’

Julien was so surprised that this name did not enlighten him. His curiosity, the prospect of a tragic interest, so attuned to his nature, gave him those sparkling eyes which a story-teller so loves to see in his audience. The Academician, delighted to find a virgin ear, related at full length to Julien how, on the 30th of April, 1574, the handsomest young man of his age, Boniface de La Mole, and Annibal de Coconasso, a Piedmontese gentleman, his friend, had been beheaded on the Place de Greve. ‘La Mole was the adored lover of Queen Marguerite of Navarre; and observe,’ the Academician added, ‘that Mademoiselle de La Mole is named Mathilde–Marguerite. La Mole was at the same time the favourite of the Duc d’Alencon and an intimate friend of the King of Navarre, afterwards Henri IV, the husband of his mistress. On Shrove Tuesday in this year, 1574, the Court happened to be at Saint–Germain, with the unfortunate King Charles IX, who was on his deathbed. La Mole wished to carry off the Princes, his friends, whom Queen Catherine de’ Medici was keeping as prisoners with the Court. He brought up two hundred horsemen under the walls of Saint–Germain, the Due d’Alencon took fright, and La Mole was sent to the scaffold.

‘But what appeals to Mademoiselle Mathilde, as she told me herself, seven or eight years ago, when she was only twelve, for she has a head, such a head! .. .’ and the Academician raised his eyes to heaven. ‘What impresses her in this political catastrophe is that Queen Marguerite of Navarre, who

had waited concealed in a house on the Place de Greve, made bold to ask the executioner for her lover's head. And the following night, at midnight, she took the head in her carriage, and went to bury it with her own hands in a chapel which stood at the foot of the hill of Montmartre.'

'Is it possible?' exclaimed Julien, deeply touched.

'Mademoiselle Mathilde despises her brother because, as you see, he thinks nothing of all this ancient history, and never goes into mourning on the 30th of April. It is since this famous execution, and to recall the intimate friendship between La Mole and Coconasso, which Coconasso, being as he was an Italian, was named Annibal, that all the men of this family have borne that name. And,' the Academician went on, lowering his voice, 'this Coconasso was, on the authority of Charles IX, himself, one of the bloodiest assassins on the 24th of August, 1572.. But how is it possible, my dear Sorel, that you are ignorant of these matters, you, who are an inmate of the house?'

'Then that is why twice, during the dinner, Mademoiselle de La Mole addressed her brother as Annibal. I thought I had not heard aright.'

'It was a reproach. It is strange that the Marquise permits such folly . . . That great girl's husband will see some fine doings!'

This expression was followed by five or six satirical phrases. The joy at thus revealing an intimate secret that shone in the Academician's eyes shocked Julien. 'What are we but a pair of servants engaged in slandering our employers?' he thought. 'But nothing ought to surprise me that is done by this academic gentleman.'

One day Julien had caught him on his knees before the Marquise de La Mole; he was begging her for a tobacco licence for a nephew in the country. That night, he gathered from a little maid of Mademoiselle de La Mole, who was making love to him, as Elisa had done in the past, that her mistress's mourning was by no means put on to attract attention. This eccentricity was an intimate part of her nature. She really loved this La Mole, the favoured lover of the most brilliant Queen of her age, who had died for having sought to set his friends at liberty. And what friends! The First Prince of the Blood and Henri IV.

Accustomed to the perfect naturalness that shone through the whole of Madame de Renal's conduct, Julien saw nothing but affectation in all the women of Paris, and even without feeling disposed to melancholy, could think of nothing to say to them. Mademoiselle de La Mole was the exception.

He began no longer to mistake for hardness of heart the kind of beauty that goes with nobility of bearing. He had long conversations with Mademoiselle de La Mole, who would stroll with him in the garden sometimes after dinner, past the open windows of the drawing-room. She told him one day that she was reading d'Aubigne's History, and Brantome. 'A strange choice,' thought Julien, 'and the Marquise does not allow her to read the novels of Walter Scott!'

One day she related to him, with that glow of pleasure in her eyes which proves the sincerity of the speaker's admiration, the feat of a young woman in the reign of Henri in, which she had just discovered in the Memoires by l'Etoile: finding that her husband was unfaithful, she had stabbed him.

Julien's self-esteem was flattered. A person surrounded by such deference, one who, according to the Academician, was the leader of the household, deigned to address him in a tone which might almost be regarded as friendly. 'I was mistaken,' was his next thought; 'this is not familiarity, I am only the listener to a tragic story, it is the need to speak. I am regarded as learned by this family. I shall go and read Brantome, d'Aubigne, l'Etoile. I shall be able to challenge some of the anecdotes which Mademoiselle de La Mole cites to me. I must emerge from this part of a passive listener.'

In course of time his conversations with this girl, whose manner was at once so imposing and so easy, became more interesting. He forgot his melancholy role as a plebeian in revolt. He found her learned and indeed rational. Her opinions in the garden differed widely from those which she maintained in the drawing-room. At times she displayed with him an enthusiasm and a frankness which formed a perfect contrast with her normal manner, so haughty and cold.

'The Wars of the League are the heroic age of France,' she said to him one day, her eyes aflame with intellect and enthusiasm. 'Then everyone fought to

secure a definite object which he desired in order to make his party triumph, and not merely to win a stupid Cross as in the days of your Emperor. You must agree that there was less egoism and pettiness. I love that period.'

'And Boniface de La Mole was its hero,' he said to her.

'At any rate he was loved as it is perhaps pleasant to be loved. What woman alive today would not be horrified to touch the head of her decapitated lover?'

Madame de La Mole called her daughter indoors. Hypocrisy, to be effective, must be concealed; and Julien, as we see, had taken Mademoiselle de La Mole partly into his confidence as to his admiration for Napoleon.

'That is the immense advantage which they have over us,' he said to himself, when left alone in the garden. 'The history of their ancestors raises them above vulgar sentiments, and they have not always to be thinking of their daily bread! What a wretched state of things!' he added bitterly. 'I am not worthy to discuss these serious matters. My life is nothing more than a sequence of hypocrisies, because I have not an income of a thousand francs with which to buy my bread.'

'What are you dreaming of, Sir?' Mathilde asked him, running back outdoors.

Julien was tired of despising himself. In a moment of pride, he told her frankly what he was thinking. He blushed deeply when speaking of his poverty to a person who was so rich. He sought to make it quite clear by his proud tone that he asked for nothing. Never had he seemed so handsome to Mathilde; she found in him an expression of sensibility and frankness which he often lacked.

Less than a month later, Julien was strolling pensively in the garden of the Hotel de La Mole; but his features no longer showed the harshness, as of a surly philosopher, which the constant sense of his own inferiority impressed on them. He had just come from the door of the drawing-room to which he had escorted Mademoiselle de La Mole, who pretended that she had hurt her foot when running with her brother.

‘She leaned upon my arm in the strangest fashion!’ Julien said to himself. ‘Am I a fool, or can it be true that she has a liking for me? She listens to me so meekly even when I confess to her all the sufferings of my pride! She, who is so haughty with everyone else! They would be greatly surprised in the drawing-room if they saw her looking like that. There is no doubt about it, she never assumes that meek, friendly air with anyone but myself.’

Julien tried not to exaggerate this singular friendship. He compared it himself to an armed neutrality. Day by day, when they met, before resuming the almost intimate tone of the day before, they almost asked themselves: ‘Are we friends today, or enemies?’ Julien had realised that, were he once to allow himself to be insulted with impunity by this haughty girl, all was lost. ‘If I must quarrel, is it not to my advantage to do so from the first, in defending the lawful rights of my pride, rather than in repelling the marks of contempt that must quickly follow the slightest surrender of what I owe to my personal dignity?’

Several times, on days of mutual discord, Mathilde tried to adopt with him the tone of a great lady; she employed a rare skill in these attempts, but Julien repulsed them rudely.

One day he interrupted her suddenly: ‘Has Mademoiselle de La Mole some order to give to her father’s secretary?’ he asked her; ‘he is obliged to listen to her orders and to carry them out with respect; but apart from that, he has not one word to say to her. He certainly is not paid to communicate his thoughts to her.’

This state of affairs, and the singular doubts which Julien felt banished the boredom which he found regularly in that drawing-room, in which, for all its magnificence, people were afraid of everything, and it was not thought proper to treat any subject lightly.

‘It would be amusing if she loved me! Whether she loves me or not,’ Julien went on, ‘I have as my intimate confidant an intelligent girl, before whom I see the whole household tremble, and most of all the Marquis de Croisenois. That young man who is so polished, so gentle, so brave, who combines in his own person all the advantages of birth and fortune, any one of which would set my heart so at ease! He is madly in love with her, he is going to

marry her. Think of all the letters M. de La Mole has made me write to the two lawyers arranging the contract! And I who see myself so subordinate, pen in hand, two hours later, here in the garden, I triumph over so attractive a young man: for after all, her preference is striking, direct. Perhaps, too, she hates the idea of him as a future husband. She is proud enough for that. And the favour she shows me, I obtain on the footing of a confidential servant!

'But no, either I am mad, or she is making love to me; the more I show myself cold and respectful towards her, the more she seeks me out. That might be deliberate, an affectation; but I see her eyes become animated when I appear unexpectedly. Are the women of Paris capable of pretending to such an extent? What does it matter! I have appearances on my side, let us make the most of them. My God, how handsome she is! How I admire her great blue eyes, seen at close range, and looking at me as they often do! What a difference between this spring and the last, when I was living in misery, keeping myself alive by my strength of character, surrounded by those three hundred dirty and evil-minded hypocrites! I was almost as evil as they.'

In moments of depression: That girl is making a fool of me,' Julien would think. 'She is plotting with her brother to mystify me. But she seems so to despise her brother's want of energy! He is brave, and there is no more to be said, she tells me. He has not an idea which ventures to depart from the fashion. It is always I who am obliged to take up her defence. A girl of nineteen! At that age can a girl be faithful at every moment of the day to the code of hypocrisy that she has laid down for herself?

'On the other hand, when Mademoiselle de La Mole fastens her great blue eyes on me with a certain strange expression, Comte Norbert always moves away. That seems to me suspicious; ought he not to be annoyed at his sister's singling out a domestic of their household? For I have heard the Duc de Chaulnes use that term of me.' At this memory anger obliterated every other feeling. 'Is it only the love of old-fashioned speech in that ducal maniac?

'Anyhow, she is pretty!' Julien went on, with the glare of a tiger. 'I will have her, I shall then depart and woe to him that impedes me in my flight!'

This plan became Julien's sole occupation; he could no longer give a thought to anything else. His days passed like hours. At all hours of the day, when he

sought to occupy his mind with some serious business, his thoughts would abandon everything, and he would come to himself a quarter of an hour later, his heart throbbing, his head confused, and dreaming of this one idea: ‘Does she love me?’

Chapter 11

The Tyranny of a Girl

I admire her beauty, but I fear her intelligence.

MERIMEE

Had Julien devoted to the consideration of what went on in the drawing-room the time which he spent in exaggerating Mathilde's beauty, or in lashing himself into a fury at the aloofness natural to her family, whom she was forgetting in his company, he would have understood in what her despotic power over everyone round about her consisted. Whenever anyone earned Mademoiselle de La Mole's displeasure, she knew how to punish him by a witticism so calculated, so well chosen, apparently so harmless, so aptly launched, that the wound it left deepened the more he thought of it. In time she became deadly to wounded vanity. As she attached no importance to many things that were the object of serious ambition with the rest of her family, she always appeared cool in their eyes. The drawing-rooms of the nobility are pleasant things to mention after one has left them, but that is all; bare politeness is something in itself only for the first few days. Julien experienced this; after the first enchantment, the first bewilderment. 'Politeness,' he said to himself, 'is nothing more than the absence of the irritation which would come from bad manners.' Mathilde was frequently bored, perhaps she would have been bored in any circumstances. At such times to sharpen the point of an epigram was for her a distraction and a real pleasure.

It was perhaps in order to have victims slightly more amusing than her distinguished relatives, the Academician and the five or six other inferiors who formed their court, that she had given grounds for hope to the Marquis

de Croisenois, the Comte de Caylus and two or three other young men of the highest distinction. They were nothing more to her than fresh subjects for epigram.

We confess with sorrow, for we are fond of Mathilde, that she had received letters from several of their number, and had occasionally answered them. We hasten to add that this character in our story forms an exception to the habits of the age. It is not, generally speaking, with want of prudence that one can reproach the pupils of the noble Convent of the Sacre–Coeur.

One day the Marquis de Croisenois returned to Mathilde a distinctly compromising letter which she had written him the day before. He thought that by this sign of extreme prudence he was greatly strengthening his position. But imprudence was what Mathilde enjoyed in her correspondence. It was her chief pleasure to play with fire. She did not speak to him again for six weeks.

She amused herself with the letters of these young men; but, according to her, they were all alike. It was always the most profound, the most melancholy passion.

‘They are all the same perfect gentlemen, ready to set off for Palestine,’ she said to her cousin. ‘Can you think of anything more insipid? Think that this is the sort of letter that I am going to receive for the rest of my life! These letters can only change every twenty years, according to the kind of occupation that is in fashion. They must have been less colourless in the days of the Empire. Then all these young men in society had seen or performed actions in which there was real greatness. The Due de N —— , my uncle, fought at Wagram.’

‘What intelligence is required to wield a sabre? And when that has happened to them, they talk about it so often!’ said Mademoiselle de Sainte–Heredite, Mathilde’s cousin.

‘Oh, well, those stories amuse me. To have been in a real battle, one of Napoleon’s battles, in which ten thousand soldiers were killed, is a proof of courage. Exposing oneself to danger elevates the soul, and saves it from the boredom in which all my poor adorers seem to be plunged; and it is

contagious, that boredom. Which of them ever dreams of doing anything out of the common? They seek to win my hand, a fine enterprise! I am rich, and my father will help on his son-inlaw. Oh, if only he could find one who was at all amusing!'

Mathilde's vivid, picturesque point of view affected her speech, as we can see. Often something she said jarred on the refined nerves of her highly polished friends. They would almost have admitted, had she been less in the fashion, that there was something in her language a little too highly coloured for feminine delicacy.

She, on her part, was most unjust to the handsome men on horseback who throng the Bois de Boulogne. She looked towards the future, not with terror, that would have been too strong a feeling, but with a disgust very rare at her age.

What had she left to desire? Fortune, noble birth, wit, beauty, or so it was said, and she believed, all had been heaped upon her by the hand of chance.

Such were the thoughts of the most envied heiress of the Faubourg Saint–Germain, when she began to find pleasure in strolling with Julien. She was amazed at his pride; she admired the cunning of this little plebeian. 'He will manage to get himself made a Bishop like the abbe Maury,' she said to herself.

Presently the sincere and unfeigned resistance, with which our hero received a number of her ideas, began to occupy her mind; she thought about him; she reported to her cousin the pettiest details of their conversations, and found that she could never succeed in displaying them in every aspect.

Suddenly an idea dawned upon her: 'I have the good fortune to be in love,' she told herself one day, with an indescribable transport of joy. 'I am in love, I am in love, it is quite clear! At my age, a young girl, beautiful, clever, where can she find sensations, if not in love? I may do what I like, I shall never feel any love for Croisenois, Caylus, e tutti quanti. They are perfect, too perfect perhaps; in short, they bore me.'

She turned over in her mind all the descriptions of passion which she had read in Manon Lescaut, the Nouvelle Heloise, the Letters of a Portuguese Nun, and so forth. There was no question, of course, of anything but a grand passion; mere fleeting affection was unworthy of a girl of her age and birth. She bestowed the name of love only upon that heroic sentiment which was to be found in France in the days of Henri IV and Bassompierre. That love never basely succumbed to obstacles; far from it, it caused great deeds to be done. 'What a misfortune for me that there is not a real Court like that of Catherine de' Medici or Louis XIII! I feel that I am equal to everything that is most daring and great. What should I not do with a King who was a man of feeling, like Louis XII, sighing at my feet! I should lead him to the Vendee, as Baron de Tolly is always saying, and from there he would reconquer his Kingdom; then no more talk of a Charter . . . and Julien would aid me. What is it that he lacks? A name and a fortune. He would make a name for himself, he would acquire a fortune.

'The Marquis de Croisenois lacks nothing, and all his life long he will be merely a Duke, half Ultra, half Liberal, an undecided creature always holding back from extremes, and consequently finding himself everywhere in the second rank.

'Where is the great action which is not an extreme at the moment in which one undertakes it? It is when it is accomplished that it seems possible to creatures of common clay. Yes, it is love with all its miracles that is going to reign in my heart; I feel it by the fire that is animating me. Heaven owed me this favour. Not in vain will it have heaped every advantage upon a single head. My happiness will be worthy of myself. Each of my days will not coldly resemble the day before. There is already something grand and audacious in daring to love a man placed so far beneath me in social position. Let me see: will he continue to deserve me? At the first sign of weakness that I observe in him, I abandon him. A girl of my birth, and with the chivalrous character which they are so kind as to attribute to me' (this was one of her father's sayings) 'ought not to behave like a fool.

'Is not that the part that I should be playing if I loved the Marquis de Croisenois? It would be simply a repetition of the happiness of my cousins, whom I despise so utterly. I know beforehand everything that the poor Marquis would say to me, all that I should have to say to him in reply. What

is the use of a love that makes one yawn? One might as well take to religion. I should have a scene at the signing of my marriage contract like my youngest cousin, with the noble relatives shedding tears, provided they were not made angry by a final condition inserted in the contract the day before by the solicitor to the other party.'

Chapter 12

Another Danton

The need for anxiety explains the character of the beautiful Marguerite de Valois, my aunt, who soon afterwards married the King of Navarre, whom we now see on the throne of France under the name of Henri IV. The need to gamble was the key to the character of this delightful princess; hence the quarrels and the reconciliations with her brothers from the age of sixteen onwards. And what does a young girl gamble with? The most precious thing she has: her reputation, the possibility of esteem for her entire life.

Memoirs of the Due d'Angouleme, natural son of Charles IX

'With Julien and me there is no contract to be signed, no lawyer; everything is heroic, everything will be left to chance. But for nobility, which he lacks, it is the love of Marguerite de Valois for young La Mole, the most distinguished man of his time. Is it my fault if the young men at Court are such ardent devotees of the Conventions, and turn pale at the mere thought of any adventure that is slightly out of the common? A little expedition to Greece or Africa is to them the height of audacity, and even then they can only go in a troop. As soon as they find themselves alone, they become afraid, not of Bedouin spears, but of ridicule, and that drives them mad.

'My little Julien, on the contrary, will only act alone. Never, in that privileged being, is there the slightest thought of seeking the approval and support of others! He despises other people, that is why I do not despise him.

'If, with his poverty, Julien had been noble, my love would be nothing more than a piece of vulgar folly, an unfortunate marriage; I should not object to that; it would lack that element which characterises great passion: the

immensity of the difficulty to be overcome and the black uncertainty of events.'

Mademoiselle de La Mole was so absorbed in these fine speculations that next day, quite unintentionally, she sang Julien's praises to the Marquis de Croisenois and her brother. Her eloquence went so far that they became annoyed.

'Beware of that young man, who has so much energy,' her brother cried; 'if the Revolution begins again, he will have us all guillotined.'

She made no answer, and hastened to tease her brother and the Marquis de Croisenois over the fear that energy inspired in them. It was nothing more, really, than the fear of meeting something unexpected, the fear of being brought up short in the presence of the unexpected . . .

'Still, gentlemen, still the fear of ridicule, a monster which, unfortunately, died in 1816.'

'There can be no more ridicule,' M. de La Mole used to say, 'in a country where there are two Parties.'

His daughter had assimilated this idea.

'And so, gentlemen,' she told Julien's enemies, 'you will be haunted by fear all your lives, and afterwards people will say of you:

'"It was not a wolf, it was only a shadow."'

Mathilde soon left them. Her brother's remark filled her with horror; it greatly disturbed her; but after sleeping on it, she interpreted it as the highest possible praise.

'In this age, when all energy is dead, his energy makes them afraid. I shall tell him what my brother said. I wish to see what answer he will make. But I shall choose a moment when his eyes are glowing. Then he cannot lie to me.

'Another Danton?' she went on after a long, vague spell of musing. 'Very well! Let us suppose that the Revolution has begun. What parts would

Croisenois and my brother play? It is all prescribed for them: sublime resignation. They would be heroic sheep, allowing their throats to be cut without a word. Their sole fear when dying would still be of committing a breach of taste. My little Julien would blow out the brains of the Jacobin who came to arrest him, if he had the slightest hope of escaping. He, at least, has no fear of bad taste.'

These last words made her pensive again; they revived painful memories, and destroyed all her courage. They reminded her of the witticisms of MM. de Caylus, de Croisenois, de Luz, and her brother. These gentlemen were unanimous in accusing Julien of a priestly air, humble and hypocritical.

'But,' she went on, suddenly, her eye sparkling with joy, 'by the bitterness and the frequency of their sarcasms, they prove, in spite of themselves, that he is the most distinguished man that we have seen this winter. What do his faults, his absurdities matter? He has greatness, and they are shocked by it, they who in other respects are so kind and indulgent. He knows well that he is poor, and that he has studied to become a priest; they are squadron commanders, and have no need of study; it is a more comfortable life.

'In spite of all the drawbacks of his eternal black coat, and of that priestly face, which he is obliged to assume, poor boy, if he is not to die of hunger, his merit alarms them, nothing could be clearer. And that priestly expression, he no longer wears it when we have been for a few moments by ourselves. Besides, when these gentlemen say anything which they consider clever and startling, is not their first glance always at Julien? I have noticed that distinctly. And yet they know quite well that he never speaks to them, unless he is asked a question. It is only myself that he addresses. He thinks that I have a lofty nature. He replies to their objections only so far as politeness requires. He becomes respectful at once. With me, he will discuss things for hours on end, he is not sure of his own ideas if I offer the slightest objection. After all, all this winter we have not heard a shot fired; the only possible way to attract attention has been by one's talk. Well, my father, a superior man, and one who will greatly advance the fortunes of our family, respects Julien. All the rest hate him, no one despises him, except my mother's religious friends.'

The Comte de Caylus had or pretended to have a great passion for horses; he spent all his time in his stables, and often took his luncheon there. This great passion, combined with his habit of never laughing, had won him a great esteem among his friends: he was the ‘strong man’ of their little circle.

As soon as it had assembled next day behind Madame de La Mole’s armchair, Julien not being present, M. de Caylus, supported by Croisenois and Norbert, launched a violent attack upon the good opinion Mathilde had of Julien, without any reason and almost as soon as he saw Mademoiselle de La Mole. She detected this stratagem a mile off, and was charmed by it.

‘There they are all in league,’ she said to herself, ‘against a man who has not ten louis to his name, and can answer them only when he is questioned. They are afraid of him in his black coat. What would he be with epaulettes?’

Never had she been so brilliant. At the first onslaught, she covered Caylus and his allies with witty sarcasm. When the fire of these brilliant officers’ pleasantries was extinguished:

‘Tomorrow some country squire from the mountains of the Franche–Comte,’ she said to M. de Caylus, ‘has only to discover that Julien is his natural son, and give him a name and a few thousand francs, and in six weeks he will have grown moustaches like yourselves, gentlemen; in six months he will be an officer of hussars like yourselves, gentlemen. And then the greatness of his character will no longer be a joke. I can see you reduced, My Lord Duke-to-be, to that old and worthless plea: the superiority of the nobility of the Court to the provincial nobility. But what defence have you left if I choose to take an extreme case, if I am so unkind as to make Julien’s father a Spanish Duke, a prisoner of war at Besancon in Napoleon’s time, who, from a scruple of conscience, acknowledges him on his deathbed?’

All these assumptions of a birth out of wedlock were regarded by MM. de Caylus and de Croisenois as in distinctly bad taste. This was all that they saw in Mathilde’s argument.

Obedient as Norbert was, his sister’s meaning was so unmistakable that he assumed an air of gravity, little in keeping, it must be confessed, with his genial, smiling features. He ventured to say a few words:

‘Are you unwell, dear?’ Mathilde answered him with a mock-serious expression. ‘You must be feeling very ill to reply to a joke with a sermon.

‘A sermon, from you! Are you thinking of asking to be made a Prefect?’

Mathilde very soon forgot the annoyance of the Comte de Caylus, Norbert’s ill humour and the silent despair of M. de Croisenois. She had to make up her mind over a desperate idea which had taken possession of her.

‘Julien is quite sincere with me,’ she told herself; ‘at his age, in an inferior state of fortune, wretched as an astounding ambition makes him, he needs a woman friend. I can be that friend; but I see no sign in him of love. With the audacity of his nature, he would have spoken to me of his love.’

This uncertainty, this inward discussion, which, from now onwards, occupied every moment of Mathilde’s life, and in support of which, whenever Julien addressed her, she found fresh arguments, completely banished those periods of depression to which she was so liable.

The daughter of a man of intelligence who might become a Minister, and restore their forests to the Clergy, Mademoiselle de La Mole had been, in the Convent of the Sacre–Coeur, the object of the most extravagant flatteries. The harm done in this way can never be effaced. They had persuaded her that, in view of all her advantages of birth, fortune, etc., she ought to be happier than other girls. This is the source of the boredom from which princes suffer, and of all their follies.

Mathilde had not been immune to the fatal influence of this idea. However intelligent a girl may be, she cannot be on her guard for ten years against the flattery of an entire convent, especially when it appears to be so well founded.

>From the moment in which she decided that she was in love with Julien, she was no longer bored. Every day she congratulated herself on the decision she had made to indulge in a grand passion. ‘This amusement has its dangers,’ she thought. ‘All the better! A thousand times better!

‘Without a grand passion, I was languishing with boredom at the best moment in a girl’s life, between sixteen and twenty. I have already wasted

my best years; with no pleasure but to listen to the nonsense talked by my mother's friends, who at Coblenz, in 1792, were not quite, one gathers, so strict in their conduct, as they are today in speech.'

It was while Mathilde was still devoured by this great uncertainty that Julien was unable to understand the gaze which she kept fastened upon him. He did indeed find an increased coldness in Comte Herbert's manner, and a stiffening of pride in that of MM. de Caylus, de Luz and de Croisenois. He was used to it. This discomfiture befell him at times after an evening in which he had shone more brightly than befitted his position. But for the special welcome which Mathilde extended to him, and the curiosity which the whole scene inspired in him, he would have refrained from following into the garden these brilliant young men with the moustaches, when after dinner they escorted Mademoiselle de La Mole.

'Yes, I cannot possibly blind myself to the fact,' thought Julien, 'Mademoiselle de La Mole keeps looking at me in a strange fashion. But, even when her beautiful blue eyes seem to gaze at me with least restraint, I can always read in them a cold, malevolent scrutiny. Is it possible that this is love? How different from the look in Madame de Renal's eyes.'

One evening after dinner, Julien, who had gone with M. de La Mole to his study, came rapidly out to the garden. As he walked boldly up to the group round Mathilde, he overheard a few words uttered in a loud voice. She was teasing her brother. Julien heard his own name uttered distinctly twice. He appeared; a profound silence at once fell, and vain efforts were made to break it. Mademoiselle de La Mole and her brother were too much excited to think of another topic of conversation. MM. de Caylus, de Croisenois, de Luz and another of their friends met Julien with an icy coldness. He withdrew.

Chapter 13

A Plot

Disconnected remarks, chance meetings turn into proofs of the utmost clarity in the eyes of the imaginative man, if he has any fire in his heart.

SCHILLER

On the following day he again surprised Norbert and his sister, who were talking about him. On his arrival, a deathly silence fell, as on the day before. His suspicions knew no bounds. ‘Can these charming young people be planning to make a fool of me? I must own, that is far more probable, far more natural than a pretended passion on the part of Mademoiselle de La Mole, for a poor devil of a secretary. For one thing, do these people have passions? Mystification is their specialty. They are jealous of my wretched little superiority in language. Being jealous, that is another of their weaknesses. That explains everything. Mademoiselle de La Mole hopes to persuade me that she is singling me out, simply to offer me as a spectacle to her intended.’

This cruel suspicion completely changed Julien’s moral attitude. The idea encountered in his heart a germ of love which it had no difficulty in destroying. This love was founded only upon Mathilde’s rare beauty, or rather upon her regal manner and her admirable style in dress. In this respect Julien was still an upstart. A beautiful woman of fashion is, we are assured, the sight that most astonishes a clever man of peasant origin when he arrives amid the higher ranks of society. It was certainly not Mathilde’s character that had set Julien dreaming for days past. He had enough sense to grasp that he knew nothing about her character. Everything that he saw of it might be only a pretence.

For instance, Mathilde would not for anything in the world have failed to hear mass on a Sunday; almost every day she went to church with her mother. If, in the drawing-room of the Hotel de La Mole, some impudent fellow forgot where he was and allowed himself to make the remotest allusion to some jest aimed at the real or supposed interests of Throne or Altar, Mathilde would at once assume an icy severity. Her glance, which was so sparkling, took on all the expressionless pride of an old family portrait.

But Julien knew for certain that she always had in her room one or two of the most philosophical works of Voltaire. He himself frequently abstracted a volume or two of the handsome edition so magnificently bound. By slightly separating the other volumes on the shelf, he concealed the absence of the volume he was taking away; but soon he discovered that someone else was reading Voltaire. He had recourse to a trick of the Seminary, he placed some little pieces of horsehair across the volumes which he supposed might interest Mademoiselle de La Mole. They vanished for weeks at a time.

M. de La Mole, losing patience with his bookseller, who kept sending him all the sham Memoirs, gave Julien orders to buy every new book that was at all sensational. But, so that the poison might not spread through the household, the secretary was instructed to place these books in a little bookcase that stood in the Marquis's own room. He soon acquired the certainty that if any of these books were hostile to the interests of Throne and Altar, they were not long in vanishing. It was certainly not Norbert that was reading them.

Julien, exaggerating the importance of this discovery, credited Mademoiselle de La Mole with a Machiavellian duplicity. This feigned criminality wa a charm in his eyes, almost the only moral charm that she possessed. The tediousness of hypocrisy and virtuous conversation drove him to this excess.

He excited his imagination rather than let himself be carried away by love.

It was after he had lost himself in dreams of the elegance of Mademoiselle de La Mole's figure, the excellent taste of her toilet, the whiteness of her hand, the beauty of her arm, the disinvoltura of all her movements, that he found himself in love. Then, to complete her charm, he imagined her to be a Catherine de' Medici. Nothing was too profound or too criminal for the

character that he assigned to her. It was the ideal of the Maslons, the Frilairs and Castanedes whom he had admired in his younger days. It was, in short, the ideal, to him, of Paris.

Was ever anything so absurd as to imagine profundity or criminality in the Parisian character?

‘It is possible that this trio may be making a fool of me,’ he thought. The reader has learned very little of Julien’s nature if he has not already seen the sombre, frigid expression that he assumed when his eyes met those of Mathilde. A bitter irony repulsed the assurances of friendship with which Mademoiselle de La Mole in astonishment ventured on two or three occasions, to try him.

Piqued by his sudden eccentricity, the heart of this girl, naturally cold, bored, responsive to intelligence, became as passionate as it was in her nature to be. But there was also a great deal of pride in Mathilde’s nature, and the birth of a sentiment which made all her happiness dependent upon another was attended by a sombre melancholy.

Julien had made sufficient progress since his arrival in Paris to discern that this was not the barren melancholy of boredom. Instead of being eager, as in the past, for parties, shows and distractions of every kind, she avoided them.

Music performed by French singers bored Mathilde to death, and yet Julien, who made it his duty to be present at the close of the Opera, observed that she made her friends take her there as often as possible. He thought he could detect that she had lost a little of the perfect balance which shone in all her actions. She would sometimes reply to her friends with witticisms that were offensive in their pointed emphasis. It seemed to him that she had taken a dislike to the Marquis de Croisenois. ‘That young man must have a furious passion for money, not to go off and leave a girl like that, however rich she may be!’ thought Julien. As for himself, indignant at the insults offered to masculine dignity, his coldness towards her increased. Often he went the length of replying with positive discourtesy.

However determined he might be not to be taken in by the signs of interest shown by Mathilde, they were so evident on certain days, and Julien, from

whose eyes the scales were beginning to fall, found her so attractive, that he was at times embarrassed by them.

‘The skill and forbearance of these young men of fashion will end by triumphing over my want of experience,’ he told himself; ‘I must go away, and put an end to all this.’ The Marquis had recently entrusted to him the management of a number of small properties and houses which he owned in lower Languedoc. A visit to the place became necessary: M. de La Mole gave a reluctant consent. Except in matters of high ambition, Julien had become his second self.

‘When all is said and done, they have not managed to catch me,’ Julien told himself as he prepared for his departure. ‘Whether the jokes which Mademoiselle de La Mole makes at the expense of these gentlemen be real, or only intended to inspire me with confidence, I have been amused by them.

‘If there is no conspiracy against the carpenter’s son, Mademoiselle de La Mole is inexplicable, but she is just as much so to the Marquis de Croisenois as to me. Yesterday, for instance, her ill humour was quite genuine, and I had the pleasure of seeing discomfited in my favour a young man as noble and rich as I am penniless and plebeian. That is my finest triumph. It will keep me in good spirits in my post-chaise, as I scour the plains of Languedoc.’

He had kept his departure secret, but Mathilde knew better than he that he was leaving Paris next day, and for a long time. She pleaded a splitting headache, which was made worse by the close atmosphere of the drawing-room. She walked for hours in the garden, and so pursued with her mordant pleasantries Norbert, the Marquis de Croisenois, Caylus, de Luz and various other young men who had dined at the Hotel de La Mole, that she forced them to take their leave. She looked at Julien in a strange fashion.

‘This look is perhaps a piece of play-acting,’ thought he; ‘but her quick breathing, all that emotion! Bah!’ he said to himself, ‘who am I to judge of these matters? This is an example of the most consummate, the most artificial behaviour to be found among the women of Paris. That quick breathing, which so nearly proved too much for me, she will have learned from Leontine Fay, whom she admires so.’

They were now left alone; the conversation was plainly languishing. ‘No! Julien has no feeling for me,’ Mathilde told herself with genuine distress.

As he took leave of her, she clutched his arm violently:

‘You will receive a letter from me this evening,’ she told him in a voice so strained as to be barely audible.

This had an immediate effect on Julien.

‘My father,’ she went on, ‘has a most natural regard for the services that you render him. You must not go tomorrow; find some excuse.’ And she ran from the garden.

Her figure was charming. It would have been impossible to have a prettier foot, she ran with a grace that enchanted Julien; but guess what was his second thought when she had quite vanished. He was offended by the tone of command in which she had uttered the words, you must. Similarly Louis XV, as he breathed his last, was keenly annoyed by the words you must awkwardly employed by his Chief Physician, and yet Louis XV was no upstart.

An hour later, a footman handed Julien a letter; it was nothing less than a declaration of love.

‘The style is not unduly affected,’ he said to himself, seeking by literary observations to contain the joy that was contorting his features and forcing him to laugh in spite of himself.

‘And so I,’ he suddenly exclaimed, his excitement being too strong to be held in check, ‘I, a poor peasant, have received a declaration of love from a great lady!

‘As for myself, I have not done badly,’ he went on, controlling his joy as far as was possible. ‘I have succeeded in preserving the dignity of my character. I have never said that I was in love.’ He began to study the shapes of her letters; Mademoiselle de La Mole wrote in a charming little English hand. He required some physical occupation to take his mind from a joy which was bordering on delirium.

‘Your departure obliges me to speak . . . It would be beyond my endurance not to see you any more.’

A sudden thought occurred to strike Julien as a discovery, interrupt the examination that he was making of Mathilde’s letter, and intensify his joy. ‘I am preferred to the Marquis de Croisenois,’ he cried, ‘I, who never say anything that is not serious! And he is so handsome! He wears moustaches, a charming uniform; he always manages to say, just at the right moment, something witty and clever.’

It was an exquisite moment for Julien; he roamed about the garden, mad with happiness.

Later, he went upstairs to his office, and sent in his name to the Marquis de La Mole, who fortunately had not gone out. He had no difficulty in proving to him, by showing him various marked papers that had arrived from Normandy, that the requirements of his employer’s lawsuits there obliged him to postpone his departure for Languedoc.

‘I am very glad you are not going,’ the Marquis said to him, when they had finished their business, ‘I like to see you.’ Julien left the room; this speech disturbed him.

‘And I am going to seduce his daughter! To render impossible, perhaps, that marriage with the Marquis de Croisenois, which is the bright spot in his future: if he is not made Duke, at least his daughter will be entitled to a tabouret.’ Julien thought of starting for Languedoc in spite of Mathilde’s letter, in spite of the explanation he had given the Marquis. This virtuous impulse soon faded.

‘How generous I am,’ he said to himself; ‘I, a plebeian, to feel pity for a family of such high rank! I, whom the Duc de Chaulnes calls a domestic! How does the Marquis increase his vast fortune? By selling national securities, when he hears at the Chateau that there is to be the threat of a Coup d’ Etat next day. And I, cast down to the humblest rank by a stepmotherly Providence, I, whom Providence has endowed with a noble heart and not a thousand francs of income, that is to say not enough for my daily bread, literally speaking, not enough for my daily bread; am I to refuse

a pleasure that is offered me? A limpid spring which wells up to quench my thirst in the burning desert of mediocrity over which I trace my painful course! Faith, I am no such fool; everyone for himself in this desert of selfishness which is called life.'

And he reminded himself of several disdainful glances aimed at him by Madame de La Mole, and especially by the ladies, her friends.

The pleasure of triumphing over the Marquis de Croisenois completed the rout of this lingering trace of virtue.

'How I should love to make him angry!' said Julien; 'with what assurance would I now thrust at him with my sword.' And he struck a sweeping blow at the air. 'Until now, I was a smug, basely profiting by a trace of courage. After this letter, I am his equal.

'Yes,' he said to himself with an infinite delight, dwelling on the words, 'our merits, the Marquis's and mine, have been weighed, and the poor carpenter from the Jura wins the day.

'Good!' he cried, 'here is the signature to my reply ready found. Do not go and imagine, Mademoiselle de La Mole, that I am forgetting my station. I shall make you realise and feel that it is for the son of a carpenter that you are betraying a descendant of the famous Guy de Croisenois, who followed Saint Louis on his Crusade.'

Julien was unable to contain his joy. He was obliged to go down to the garden. His room, in which he had locked himself up, seemed too confined a space for him to breathe in.

'I, a poor peasant from the Jura,' he kept on repeating, 'I, I condemned always to wear this dismal black coat! Alas, twenty years ago, I should have worn uniform like them! In those days a man of my sort was either killed, or a General at six and thirty.' The letter, which he kept tightly clasped in his hand, gave him the bearing and pose of a hero. 'Nowadays, it is true, with the said black coat, at the age of forty, a man has emoluments of one hundred thousand francs and the Blue Riband, like the Bishop of Beauvais.

‘Oh, well!’ he said to himself, laughing like Mephistopheles, ‘I have more sense than they; I know how to choose the uniform of my generation.’ And he felt an intensification of his ambition and of his attachment to the clerical habit. ‘How many Cardinals have there been of humbler birth than mine, who have risen to positions of government! My fellow-countryman Granvelle, for instance.’†

† Antoine de Granvelle, born at Besancon in 1517, was Minister to Charles V and Philip II and Governor of the Netherlands. C. K. S. M.]

Gradually Julien’s agitation subsided; prudence rose to the surface. He said to himself, like his master Tartuffe, whose part he knew by heart:

‘I might suppose these words an honest artifice . . . Nay, I shall not believe so flattering a speech Unless some favour shown by her for whom I sigh Assure me that they mean all that they might imply.’

(Tartuffe, Act IV, Scene V)

‘Tartuffe also was ruined by a woman, and he was as good a man as most . . . My answer may be shewn . . . a mishap for which we find this remedy,’ he went on, pronouncing each word slowly, and in accents of restrained ferocity, ‘we begin it by quoting the strongest expressions from the letter of the sublime Mathilde.

‘Yes, but then four of M. de Croisenois’s flunkeys will spring upon me, and tear the original from me.

‘No, for I am well armed, and am accustomed, as they know, to firing on flunkeys.

‘Very well! Say, one of them has some courage; he springs upon me. He has been promised a hundred napoleons. I kill or injure him, all the better, that is what they want. I am flung into prison with all the forms of law; I appear in the police court, and they send me, with all justice and equity on the judges’ part, to keep MM. Fontan and Magalon company at Poissy. There, I lie upon straw with four hundred poor wretches, pell-mell . . . And I am to feel some pity for these people,’ he cried, springing impetuously to his feet. ‘What pity do they show for the Third Estate when they have us in their power?’ These

words were the dying breath of his gratitude to M. de La Mole which, in spite of himself, had tormented him until then.

‘Not so fast, my fine gentlemen, I understand this little stroke of Machiavellianism; the abbe Maslon or M. Castanede of the Seminary could not have been more clever. You rob me of my incitement, the letter, and I become the second volume of Colonel Caron at Colmar.

‘One moment, gentlemen, I am going to send the fatal letter in a carefully sealed packet to the custody of M. l’abbe Pirard. He is an honest man, a Jansenist, and as such out of reach of the temptations of the Budget. Yes, but he opens letters . . . it is to Fouque that I must send this one.’

It must be admitted the glare in Julien’s eyes was ghastly, his expression hideous; it was eloquent of unmitigated crime. He was an unhappy man at war with the whole of society.

‘To arms!’ cried Julien. And he sprang with one bound down the steps that led from the house. He entered the letter-writer’s booth at the street corner; the man was alarmed. ‘Copy this,’ said Julien, giving him Mademoiselle de La Mole’s letter.

While the writer was thus engaged, he himself wrote to Fouque; he begged him to keep for him a precious article. ‘But,’ he said to himself, laying down his pen, ‘the secret room in the post office will open my letter, and give you back the one you seek; no, gentlemen.’ He went and bought an enormous Bible from a Protestant bookseller, skilfully concealed Mathilde’s letter in the boards, had it packed up with his own letter, and his parcel went off by the mail, addressed to one of Fouque’s workmen, whose name was unknown to anybody in Paris.

This done, he returned joyful and brisk to the Hotel de La Mole. ‘It is our turn, now,’ he exclaimed, as he locked himself into his room, and flung off his coat:

‘What, Mademoiselle,’ he wrote to Mathilde, ‘it is Mademoiselle de La Mole who, by the hand of Arsene, her father’s servant, transmits a letter couched in too seductive terms to a poor carpenter from the Jura, doubtless to play a

trick upon his simplicity . . . ‘ And he transcribed the most unequivocal sentences from the letter he had received.

His own would have done credit to the diplomatic prudence of M. le Chevalier de Beauvoisis. It was still only ten o’clock; Julien, intoxicated with happiness and with the sense of his own power, so novel to a poor devil like himself, went off to the Italian opera. He heard his friend Geronimo sing. Never had music raised him to so high a pitch. He was a god.†

† Esprit per, pre. gui II. A. 30. (Note by Stendhal.)]

Chapter 14

A Girl's Thoughts

So much perplexity? So many sleepless nights! Good God! Am I making myself despicable? He will despise me himself. But he's leaving, he's going.

ALFRED DE MUSSET

It was not without an inward struggle that Mathilde had brought herself to write. Whatever might have been the beginning of her interest in Julien, it soon overcame the pride which, ever since she had been aware of herself, had reigned alone in her heart. That cold and haughty spirit was carried away for the first time by a passionate sentiment. But if this overcame her pride, it was still faithful to the habits bred of pride. Two months of struggle and of novel sensations had so to speak altered her whole moral nature.

Mathilde thought she had happiness in sight. This prospect, irresistible to a courageous spirit combined with a superior intellect, had to make a long fight against dignity and every sentiment of common duty. One day she entered her mother's room, at seven o'clock in the morning, begging her for leave to retire to Villequier. The Marquise did not even deign to answer her, and recommended her to go back to her bed. This was the last effort made by plain sense and the deference paid to accepted ideas.

The fear of wrongdoing and of shocking the ideas held as sacred by the Caylus, the de Luz, the Croisenois, had little or no hold over her; such creatures as they did not seem to her to be made to understand her; she would have consulted them had it been a question of buying a carriage or an estate. Her real terror was that Julien might be displeased with her.

‘Perhaps, too, he has only the outward appearance of a superior person.’

She abhorred want of character, it was her sole objection to the handsome young men among whom she lived. The more gracefully they mocked at everything which departed from the fashion, or which followed it wrongly when intending to follow it, the more they condemned themselves in her eyes.

They were brave, and that was all. ‘And besides, how are they brave?’ she asked herself: ‘in a duel. But the duel is nothing more now than a formality. Everything is known beforehand, even what a man is to say when he falls. Lying on the grass, his hand on his heart, he must extend a handsome pardon to his adversary and leave a message for a fair one who is often imaginary, or who goes to a ball on the day of his death, for fear of arousing suspicion.

‘A man will face danger at the head of a squadron all glittering with steel, but a danger that is solitary, strange, sudden, truly ugly?

‘Alas!’ said Mathilde, ‘it was at the Court of Henri in that one found men great by character as well as by birth! Ah, if Julien had served at Jarnac or at Moncontour, I should no longer be in doubt. In those days of strength and prowess, Frenchmen were not mere dolls. The day of battle was almost the day of least perplexity.

‘Their life was not imprisoned like an Egyptian mummy, within an envelope always common to them all, always the same. Yes,’ she went on, ‘there was more true courage in crossing the town alone at eleven o’clock at night, after leaving the Hotel de Soissons, occupied by Catherine de’ Medici, than there is today in dashing to Algiers. A man’s life was a succession of hazards. Nowadays civilisation has banished hazard, there is no room for the unexpected. If it appears in our ideas, there are not epigrams enough to cope with it; if it appears in events, no act of cowardice is too great for our fear. Whatever folly our fear makes us commit is excused us. Degenerate and boring age! What would Boniface de La Mole have said if, raising his severed head from the tomb, he had seen, in 1793, seventeen of his descendants allow themselves to be penned like sheep, to be guillotined a day or two later? Their death was certain, but it would have been in bad form to defend themselves and at least kill a Jacobin or two. Ah! In the heroic age

of France, in the days of Boniface de La Mole, Julien would have been the squadron commander, and my brother the young priest, properly behaved, with wisdom in his eyes and reason on his lips.'

A few months since, Mathilde had despaired of meeting anyone a little different from the common pattern. She had found a certain happiness in allowing herself to write to various young men of fashion. This act of boldness, so unconventional, so imprudent in a young girl, might dishonour her in the eyes of M. de Croisenois, of his father, the Duc de Chaulnes, and of the whole house of Chaulnes, who, seeing the projected marriage broken off, would wish to know the reason. At that time, on the night after she had written one of these letters, Mathilde was unable to sleep. But these letters were mere replies.

Now she had ventured to say that she was in love. She had written first (what a terrible word!) to a man in the lowest rank of society.

This circumstance assured her, in the event of discovery, eternal disgrace. Which of the women who came to see her mother would dare to take her part? What polite expression could be put into their mouths to lessen the shock of the fearful contempt of the drawing-rooms?

And even to speak to a man was fearful, but to write! 'There are things which one does not write,' Napoleon exclaimed when he heard of the surrender of Baylen. And it was Julien who had told her of this saying! As though teaching her a lesson in advance.

But all this was still nothing, Mathilde's anguish had other causes. Oblivious of the horrible effect upon society, of the ineradicable blot, the universal contempt, for she was outraging her caste, Mathilde was writing to a person of a very different nature from the Croisenois, the de Luz, the Caylus.

The depth, the strangeness of Julien's character had alarmed her, even when she was forming an ordinary relation with him. And she was going to make him her lover, possibly her master!

'What claims will he not assert, if ever he is in a position to do as he likes with me? Very well! I shall say to myself like Medea: "Midst all these perils,

I have still MYSELF.”’

Julien had no reverence for nobility of blood, she understood. Worse, still, perhaps, he felt no love for her!

In these final moments of tormenting doubts, she was visited by ideas of feminine pride. ‘Everything ought to be strange in the lot of a girl like myself,’ cried Mathilde, with impatience. And so the pride that had been inculcated in her from her cradle began to fight against her virtue. It was at this point that Julien’s threatened departure came to precipitate events.

(Such characters are fortunately quite rare.)

Late that night, Julien was malicious enough to have an extremely heavy trunk carried down to the porter’s lodge; to carry it, he summoned the footman who was courting Mademoiselle de La Mole’s maid. ‘This device may lead to no result,’ he said to himself, ‘but if it proves successful, she will think that I have gone.’ He went to sleep, highly delighted with his trick. Mathilde never closed an eye.

Next morning, at a very early hour, Julien left the house unobserved, but returned before eight o’clock.

No sooner was he in the library than Mademoiselle de La Mole appeared on the threshold. He handed her his answer. He thought that it was incumbent upon him to speak to her; this, at least, was the most polite course, but Mademoiselle de La Mole would not listen to him and vanished. Julien was overjoyed, he had not known what to say to her.

‘If all this is not a trick arranged with Comte Norbert, plainly it must have been my frigid glance that has kindled the freakish love which this girl of noble birth has taken it into her head to feel for me. I should be a little too much of a fool if I ever allowed myself to be drawn into feeling any attraction towards the great flaxen doll.’ This piece of reasoning left him more cold and calculating than he had ever been.

‘In the battle that is preparing,’ he went on, ‘pride of birth will be like a high hill, forming a military position between her and myself. It is there that we must manoeuvre. I have done wrong to remain in Paris; this postponement of

my departure cheapens me, and exposes my flank if all this is only a game. What danger was there in my going? I was fooling them, if they are fooling me. If her interest in me has any reality, I was increasing that interest an hundredfold.'

Mademoiselle de La Mole's letter had so flattered Julien's vanity that, while he laughed at what was happening to him, he had forgotten to think seriously of the advantages of departure.

It was a weakness of his character to be extremely sensitive to his own faults. He was extremely annoyed at this instance of his weakness, and had almost ceased to think of the incredible victory which had preceded this slight check when, about nine o'clock, Mademoiselle de La Mole appeared on the threshold of the library, flung him a letter, and fled.

'It appears that this is to be a romance told in letters,' he said, as he picked this one up. 'The enemy makes a false move, now I am going to bring coldness and virtue into play.'

The letter called for a definite answer with an arrogance which increased his inward gaiety. He gave himself the pleasure of mystifying, for the space of two pages, the people who might wish to make a fool of him, and it was with a fresh pleasantry that he announced, towards the end of his reply, his decision to depart on the following morning.

This letter finished: 'The garden can serve me as a post office,' he thought, and made his way there. He looked up at the window of Mademoiselle de La Mole's room.

It was on the first floor, next to her mother's apartment, but there was a spacious mezzanine beneath.

This first floor stood so high, that, as he advanced beneath the lime-alley, letter in hand, Julien could not be seen from Mademoiselle de La Mole's window. The vault formed by the limes, which were admirably pleached, intercepted the view.

'But what is this!' Julien said to himself, angrily, 'another imprudence! If they have decided to make a fool of me, to let myself be seen with a letter in

my hand, is to play the enemy's game.'

Norbert's room was immediately above his sister's, and if Julien emerged from the alley formed by the pleached branches of the limes, the Count and his friends would be able to follow his every movement.

Mademoiselle de La Mole appeared behind her closed window; he half showed her his letter; she bowed her head. At once Julien ran up to his own room, and happened to meet, on the main staircase, the fair Mathilde, who snatched the letter with perfect composure and laughing eyes.

'What passion there was in the eyes of that poor Madame de Renal,' Julien said to himself, 'when, even after six months of intimate relations, she ventured to receive a letter from me! Never once, I am sure, did she look at me with a laugh in her eyes.'

He did not express to himself so clearly the rest of his comment; was he ashamed of the futility of his motives? 'But also what a difference,' his thoughts added, 'in the elegance of her morning gown, in the elegance of her whole appearance! On catching sight of Mademoiselle de La Mole thirty yards off, a man of taste could tell the rank that she occupies in society. That is what one may call an explicit merit.'

Still playing with his theme, Julien did not yet confess to himself the whole of his thoughts; Madame de Renal had had no Marquis de Croisenois to sacrifice to him. He had had as a rival only that ignoble Sub–Prefect M. Charcot, who had assumed the name of Maugiron, because the Maugirons were extinct.

At five o'clock, Julien received a third letter; it was flung at him from the library door. Mademoiselle de La Mole again fled. 'What a mania for writing,' he said to himself with a laugh, 'when it is so easy for us to talk! The enemy wishes to have my letters, that is clear, and plenty of them!' He was in no haste to open this last. 'More elegant phrases,' he thought; but he turned pale as he read it. It consisted of eight lines only.

'I have to speak to you: I must speak to you, tonight; when one o'clock strikes, be in the garden. Take the gardener's long ladder from beside the

well; place it against my window and come up to my room. There is a moon: no matter.’

Chapter 15

Is it a Plot?

Ah! How cruel is the interval between the conception of a great project and its execution! What vain terrors! What irresolutions! Life is at stake. Far more than life — honour!

SCHILLER

‘This is becoming serious,’ thought Julien . . . ‘and a little too obvious,’ he added, after a moment’s reflection. ‘Why! This pretty young beauty can speak to me in the library with a freedom which, thank heaven, is unrestricted; the Marquis, for fear of my bothering him with accounts, never comes there. Why! M. de La Mole and Comte Norbert, the only people who ever show their faces here, are absent almost all day; it is easy to watch for the moment of their return to the house, and the sublime Mathilde, for whose hand a Sovereign Prince would not be too noble, wishes me to commit an act of abominable imprudence!

‘It is clear, they wish to ruin me, or to make a fool of me, at least. First of all, they sought to ruin me by my letters; these proved cautious; very well, now they require an action that shall be as clear as daylight. These pretty little gentlemen think me too simple or too conceited. The devil! With the brightest moon you ever saw, to climb up by a ladder to a first floor, five and twenty feet from the ground! They will have plenty of time to see me, even from the neighbouring houses. I shall be a fine sight on my ladder!’ Julien went up to his room and began to pack his trunk, whistling as he did so. He had made up his mind to go, and not even to answer the letter.

But this sage resolution gave him no peace of heart. ‘If, by any chance,’ he said to himself, suddenly, his trunk packed and shut, ‘Mathilde were sincere! Then I shall be cutting in her eyes the most perfect figure of a coward. I have no birth, so I require great qualities, ready on demand, with no flattering suppositions, qualities proved by eloquent deeds . . .’

He spent a quarter of an hour pacing the floor of his room. ‘What use in denying it?’ he asked himself, at length; ‘I shall be a coward in her eyes. I lose not only the most brilliant young person in high society, as everyone was saying at M. le Duc de Retz’s ball, but, furthermore, the heavenly pleasure of seeing her throw over for me the Marquis de Croisenois, the son of a Duke, and a future Duke himself. A charming young man who has all the qualities that I lack: a ready wit, birth, fortune . . .

‘This remorse will pursue me all my life, not for her, there are heaps of mistresses, “but only one honour”, as old Don Diego says, and here I am clearly and plainly recoiling from the first peril that comes my way; for that duel with M. de Beauvoisis was a mere joke. This is quite different. I may be shot point-blank by a servant, but that is the least danger; I may forfeit my honour.

‘This is becoming serious, my boy,’ he went on, with a Gascon gaiety and accent. ‘Honur is at stake. A poor devil kept down by fate in my lowly station will never find such an opportunity again; I shall have adventures, but tawdry ones . . .’

He reflected at length, he paced the room with a hurried step, stopping short now and again. There stood in his room a magnificent bust in marble of Cardinal Richelieu, which persistently caught his eye. This bust appeared to be gazing at him sternly, as though reproaching him for the want of that audacity which ought to be so natural to the French character. ‘In thy time, great man, should I have hesitated?

‘At the worst,’ Julien told himself finally, ‘let us suppose that all this is a plot, it is a very dark one, and highly compromising for a young girl. They know that I am not the man to keep silent. They will therefore have to kill me. That was all very well in 1574, in the days of Boniface de La Mole, but the La Mole of today would never dare. These people are not the same now.

Mademoiselle de La Mole is so envied! Four hundred drawing-rooms would echo with her disgrace next day, and with what rejoicing!

‘The servants chatter among themselves of the marked preference that is shown me; I know it, I have heard them . . .

‘On the other hand, her letters! .. . They may suppose that I have them on me. They surprise me in her room, and take them from me. I shall have two, three, four, any number of men to deal with. But these men, where will they collect them? Where is one to find discreet agents in Paris? They are afraid of the law . . . Gad! It will be the Caylus and Croisenois and de Luz themselves. The thought of that moment, and the foolish figure I shall cut there among them will be what has tempted them. Beware the fate of Abelard, Master Secretary!

‘Begad, then, gentlemen, you shall bear the mark of my fists, I shall strike at your faces, like Caesar’s soldiers at Pharsalia .. . As for the letters, I can put them in a safe place.’

Julien made copies of the two last, concealed them in a volume of the fine Voltaire from the library, and went himself with the originals to the post.

When he returned: ‘Into what madness am I rushing!’ he said to himself with surprise and terror. He had been a quarter of an hour without considering his action of the coming night in all its aspects.

‘But, if I refuse, I must despise myself ever afterwards. All my life long, that action will be a matter for doubt to me, and such a doubt is the most bitter agony. Have I not felt it over Amanda’s lover? I believe that I should find it easier to forgive myself what was clearly a crime; once I had confessed it, I should cease to think about it.

‘What! I shall have been the rival of a man bearing one of the best names in France, and I myself, with a light heart, am to declare myself his inferior! Indeed, there is a strain of cowardice in not going. That word settles everything,’ cried Julien, springing to his feet . . . ‘besides, she is a real beauty!

‘If this is not treachery, how foolishly she is behaving for me! . . . If it is a mystification, begad, gentlemen, it rests with me to turn the jest to earnest, and so I shall.

‘But if they pinion my arms, the moment I enter the room; they may have set some diabolical machine there ready for me!

‘It is like a duel,’ he told himself with a laugh, ‘there is a parry for every thrust, my fencing master says, but the Almighty, who likes things to end, makes one of the fighters forget to parry. Anyhow, here is what will answer them’; he drew his pocket pistols; and, albeit they were fully charged, renewed the primings.

There were still many hours to wait; in order to have something to do, Julien wrote to Fouque: ‘My friend, open the enclosed letter only in case of accident, if you hear it said that something strange has befallen me. Then, erase the proper names from the manuscript that I am sending you, and make eight copies of it which you will send to the newspapers of Marseilles, Bordeaux, Lyons, Brussels, etc.; ten days later, have the manuscript printed, send the first copy to M. le Marquis de La Mole, and a fortnight after that, scatter the other copies by night about the streets of Verrieres.’

This brief exonerating memoir, arranged in the form of a tale, which Fouque was to open only in case of accident, Julien made as little compromising as possible to Mademoiselle de La Mole, but, nevertheless, it described his position very accurately.

He had just sealed his packet when the dinner-bell rang; it made his heart beat violently. His imagination, preoccupied with the narrative which he had just composed, was a prey to all sorts of tragic presentiment. He had seen himself seized by servants, garrotted, carried down to a cellar with a gag in his mouth. There, one of them kept a close watch over him, and if the honour of the noble family required that the adventure should have a tragic ending, it was easy to end everything with one of those poisons which leave no trace; then, they would say that he had died a natural death, and would take his dead body back to his room.

Carried away by his own story like a dramatic author, Julien was really afraid when he entered the dining-room. He looked at all the servants in full livery. He studied their expressions. ‘Which of them have been chosen for tonight’s expedition?’ he asked himself. ‘In this family, the memories of the Court of Henri in are so present, so often recalled, that, when they think themselves outraged, they will show more decision than other people of their rank.’ He looked at Mademoiselle de La Mole in order to read in her eyes what were the plans of her family; she was pale, and had quite a mediaeval appearance. Never had he found such an air of grandeur in her, she was truly beautiful and imposing. He almost fell in love with her. ‘Pallida morte futura,’ he told himself, ‘her pallor betokens that something serious is afoot.’

In vain, after dinner, did he prolong his stroll in the garden, Mademoiselle de La Mole did not come out. Conversation with her would, at that moment, have relieved his heart of a great burden.

Why not confess it? He was afraid. As he was determined to act, he abandoned himself to this sentiment without shame. ‘Provided that at the moment of action, I find the courage that I require,’ he said to himself, ‘what does it matter how I may be feeling now?’ He went to reconnoitre the position and to try the weight of the ladder.

‘It is an instrument,’ he said to himself, with a laugh, ‘which it is written in my destiny that I am to use! Here as at Verrieres. What a difference! Then,’ he continued with a sigh, ‘I was not obliged to be suspicious of the person for whose sake I was exposing myself. What a difference, too, in the danger!

‘I might have been killed in M. de Renal’s gardens without any harm to my reputation. It would have been easy to make my death unaccountable. Here, what abominable tales will they not bandy about in the drawing-rooms of the Hotel de Chaulnes, the Hotel de Caylus, the Hotel de Retz, and in short everywhere? I shall be handed down to posterity as a monster.

‘For two or three years,’ he added, laughing at himself. But the thought of this overwhelmed him. ‘And I, who is going to justify me? Supposing that Fouque prints my posthumous pamphlet, it will be only an infamy the more. What! I am received in a house, and in payment for the hospitality I receive there, the kindness that is showered upon me, I print a pamphlet reporting all

that goes on in the house! I attack the honour of its women! Ah, a thousand times rather, let us be trapped!'

It was a terrible evening.

Chapter 16

One o'Clock in the Morning

The garden was extremely large, laid out with perfect taste just a few years previously. But the trees were over a century old. The place had something rustic about it.

MASSINGER†

† I have left this motto untranslated, as the attribution to Massinger seems to be entirely fantastic. C. K. S. M.]

He was on the point of countermanding his instructions to Fouque when the clock struck eleven. He came out of his bedroom and shut the door behind him, turning the key noisily in the lock, as though he were locking himself in. He prowled round the house to see what was afoot everywhere, especially on the fourth floor, where the servants slept. There was nothing unusual. One of Madame de La Mole's maids was giving a party, the servants were merrily imbibing punch. 'The men who are laughing like that,' thought Julien, 'cannot have been detailed for the midnight encounter, they would be more serious.'

Finally he took his stand in a dark corner of the garden. 'If their plan is to avoid the notice of the servants of the house, they will make the men they have hired to seize me come in over the garden wall.

'If M. de Croisenois is taking all this calmly, he must feel that it will be less compromising for the young person whom he intends to marry to have me seized before the moment when I shall have entered her room.'

He made an extremely careful military reconnaissance. ‘My honour is at stake,’ he thought; ‘if I make some blunder, it will be no excuse in my own eyes to say to myself: “I never thought of that.”’

The sky was maddeningly clear. About eleven o’clock the moon rose, at half-past twelve it lighted the whole garden front of the house.

‘She is mad,’ Julien said to himself; when one o’clock struck, there was still a light in Comte Norbert’s windows. Never in his life had Julien been so much afraid, he saw only the dangers of the enterprise, and felt not the least enthusiasm.

He went to fetch the huge ladder, waited five minutes, to allow time for a countermand, and at five minutes past one placed the ladder against Mathilde’s window. He climbed quietly, pistol in hand, astonished not to find himself attacked. As he reached the window, she opened it silently:

‘Here you are, Sir,’ Mathilde said to him with deep emotion; ‘I have been following your movements for the last hour.’

Julien was greatly embarrassed, he did not know how to behave, he did not feel the least vestige of love. In his embarrassment, he decided that he must show courage, he attempted to embrace Mathilde.

‘Fie, Sir!’ she said, and thrust him from her.

Greatly relieved at this repulse, he hastened to cast an eye round the room: the moonlight was so brilliant that the shadows which it formed in Mademoiselle de La Mole’s room were black. ‘There may easily be men concealed there without my seeing them,’ he thought.

‘What have you in the side pocket of your coat?’ Mathilde asked him, delighted at finding a topic of conversation. She was strangely ill at ease; all the feelings of reserve and timidity, so natural to a young girl of good family, had resumed their sway and were keeping her on tenter-hooks.

‘I have all sorts of weapons and pistols,’ replied Julien, no less pleased at having something to say.

‘You must pull up the ladder,’ said Mathilde.

‘It is huge, and may break the windows of the room below, or of the mezzanine.’

‘It must not break the windows,’ Mathilde went on, trying in vain to adopt the tone of ordinary conversation; ‘you might, it seems to me, let the ladder down by means of a cord tied to the top rung. I always keep a supply of cords by me.’

‘And this is a woman in love!’ thought Julien, ‘she dares to say that she loves! Such coolness, such sagacity in her precautions make it plain to me that I am not triumphing over M. de Croisenois, as I foolishly imagined; but am simply becoming his successor. After all, what does it matter? I am not in love! I triumph over the Marquis in this sense, that he will be greatly annoyed at having a successor, and still more annoyed that his successor should be myself. How arrogantly he stared at me last night in the Cafe Tortoni, pretending not to know me! How savagely he bowed to me afterwards, when he could no longer avoid it!’

Julien had fastened the cord to the highest rung of the ladder, he now let it down gently, leaning far out over the balcony so as to see that it did not touch the windows. ‘A fine moment for killing me,’ he thought, ‘if there is anyone hidden in Mathilde’s room’; but a profound silence continued to reign everywhere.

The head of the ladder touched the ground. Julien succeeded in concealing it in the bed of exotic flowers that ran beneath the wall.

‘What will my mother say,’ said Mathilde, ‘when she sees her beautiful plants all ruined! You must throw down the cord,’ she went on, with perfect calm. ‘If it were seen running up to the balcony, it would be difficult to explain its presence.’

‘And how me gwine get way?’ asked Julien, in a playful tone, imitating Creole speech. (One of the maids in the house was a native of San Domingo.)

‘You get way by the door,’ said Mathilde, delighted at this solution.

‘Ah! How worthy this man is of all my love,’ she thought.

Julien had just let the cord drop into the garden; Mathilde gripped him by the arm. He thought he was being seized by an enemy, and turned sharply round drawing a dagger. She thought she had heard a window being opened. They stood motionless, without breathing. The moon shone full upon them. As the sound was not repeated, there was no further cause for alarm.

Then their embarrassment began again, and was great on both sides. Julien made sure that the door was fastened with all its bolts; he even thought of looking under the bed, but dared not; they might have hidden a footman or two there. Finally, the fear of a subsequent reproach from his prudence made him look.

Mathilde had succumbed to all the agonies of extreme shyness. She felt a horror of her position.

‘What have you done with my letters?’ she said, at length.

‘What a fine opportunity to discomfit these gentlemen, if they are listening, and so avoid the conflict!’ thought Julien.

‘The first is hidden in a stout Protestant Bible which last night’s mail has carried far from here.’

He spoke very distinctly as he entered into these details, and in such a way as to be overheard by anyone who might be concealed in two great mahogany wardrobes which he had not dared to examine.

‘The other two are in the post, and are going the same way as the first.’

‘Good Lord! But why all these precautions?’ said Mathilde, with astonishment.

‘Is there any reason why I should lie to her?’ thought Julien; and he confessed to her all his suspicions.

‘So that accounts for the coldness of thy letters!’ cried Mathilde, in accents rather of frenzy than of affection.

Julien did not observe her change of tone. This use of the singular pronoun made him lose his head, or at least his suspicions vanished; he ventured to clasp in his arms this girl who was so beautiful and inspired such respect in him. He was only half repulsed.

He had recourse to his memory, as once before, long ago, at Besancon with Amanda Binet, and repeated several of the finest passages from the Nouvelle Heloise.

‘Thou hast a man’s heart,’ she replied, without paying much attention to what he was saying; ‘I wished to test thy bravery, I admit. Thy first suspicions and thy determination to come shew thee to be even more intrepid than I supposed.’

Mathilde made an effort to use the more intimate form; she was evidently more attentive to this unusual way of speaking than to what she was saying. This use of the tu form, stripped of the tone of affection, ceased, after a moment, to afford Julien any pleasure, he was astonished at the absence of happiness; finally, in order to feel it, he had recourse to his reason. He saw himself highly esteemed by this girl who was so proud, and never bestowed unrestricted praise; by this line of reasoning he arrived at a gratification of his self-esteem.

This was not, it is true, that spiritual ecstasy which he had found at times in the company of Madame de Renal. There was nothing tender in his sentiments at this first moment. What he felt was the keenest gratification of his ambition, and Julien was above all things ambitious. He spoke again of the people he suspected and of the precautions he had contrived. As he spoke he was thinking of how best to profit by his victory.

Mathilde, who was still greatly embarrassed and had the air of one appalled by what she had done, seemed enchanted at finding a topic of conversation. They discussed how they should meet again. Julien employed to the full the intelligence and daring of which he furnished fresh proofs in the course of this discussion. They had some extremely sharp-sighted people against them, young Tanbeau was certainly a spy, but Mathilde and he were not altogether incompetent either.

What could be easier than to meet in the library, and arrange everything?

‘I can appear, without arousing suspicion, in any part of the house, I could almost appear in Madame de La Mole’s bedroom.’ It was absolutely necessary to pass through this room to reach her daughter’s. If Mathilde preferred that he should always come by a ladder, it was with a heart wild with joy that he would expose himself to this slight risk.

As she listened to him speaking, Mathilde was shocked by his air of triumph. ‘He is my master, then!’ she told herself. Already she was devoured by remorse. Her reason felt a horror of the signal act of folly which she had just committed. Had it been possible, she would have destroyed herself and Julien. Whenever, for an instant, the strength of her will made her remorse silent, feelings of shyness and outraged modesty made her extremely wretched. She had never for a moment anticipated the dreadful plight in which she now found herself.

‘I must speak to him, though,’ she said to herself, finally, ‘that is laid down in the rules, one speaks to one’s lover.’ And then, as though performing a duty, and with a tenderness that was evident rather in the words that she used than in the sound of her voice, she told him of the various decisions to which she had come with regard to him during the last few days.

She had made up her mind that if he ventured to come to her with the aid of the gardener’s ladder, as she had bidden him, she would give herself to him. But never were things so tender said in a colder and more formal tone. So far, their intercourse was ice-bound. It was enough to make one hate the thought of love. What a moral lesson for a rash young woman! Is it worth her while to wreck her future for such a moment?

After prolonged uncertainties, which might have appeared to a superficial observer to be due to the most decided hatred, so hard was it for the feeling of self-respect which a woman owes to herself, to yield to so masterful a will, Mathilde finally became his mistress.

To tell the truth, their transports were somewhat deliberate. Passionate love was far more a model which they were imitating than a reality with them.

Mademoiselle de La Mole believed that she was performing a duty towards herself and towards her lover. ‘The poor boy,’ she told herself, ‘has been the last word in daring, he deserves to be made happy, or else I am wanting in character.’ But she would gladly have redeemed at the cost of an eternity of suffering the cruel necessity to which she found herself committed.

In spite of the violence she was doing to herself, she retained entire command of her speech.

No regret, no reproach came to mar this night which seemed odd rather than happy to Julien. What a difference, great God, from his last visit, of twenty-four hours, to Verrieres! ‘These fine Paris manners have found out the secret of spoiling everything, even love,’ he said to himself with an extreme disregard of justice.

He abandoned himself to these reflections, standing upright in one of the great mahogany wardrobes into which he had been thrust at the first sound heard from the next room, which was Madame de La Mole’s bedroom. Mathilde accompanied her mother to mass, the maids soon left the apartment, and Julien easily made his escape before they returned to complete their labours.

He mounted his horse and made at a leisurely pace for the most solitary recesses of one of the forests near Paris. He was still more surprised than happy. The happiness which, from time to time, came flooding into his heart, was akin to that of a young Second Lieutenant who, after some astounding action, has just been promoted Colonel by the Commander in Chief; he felt himself carried to an immense height. Everything that had been above him the day before was now on his level or far beneath him. Gradually Julien’s happiness increased as he put the miles behind him.

If there was nothing tender in his heart, it was because, strange as it may appear, Mathilde, throughout the whole of her conduct with him, had been performing a duty. There was nothing unforeseen for her in all the events of this night but the misery and shame which she had found in the place of that utter bliss of which we read in novels.

‘Can I have been mistaken? Am I not in love with him?’ she asked herself.

Chapter 17

An Old Sword

I now mean to be serious: — it is time,

Since laughter nowadays is deem'd too serious.

A jest at Vice by Virtue's call'd a crime.

Don Juan, XIII.

She did not appear at dinner. In the evening she came to the drawing-room for a moment, but did not look at Julien. This behaviour seemed to him strange; 'but,' he thought, 'I do not know the ways of good society, she will give me some good reason for all this.' At the same time, urged by the most intense curiosity, he studied the expression on Mathilde's features; he could not conceal from himself that she had a sharp and malevolent air. Evidently this was not the same woman who, the night before, had felt or pretended to feel transports of joy too excessive to be genuine.

Next day, and the day after, the same coldness on her part; she never once looked at him, she seemed unaware of his existence. Julien, devoured by the keenest anxiety, was a thousand leagues from the feeling of triumph which alone had animated him on the first day. 'Can it, by any chance,' he asked himself, 'be a return to the path of virtue?' But that was a very middle-class expression to use of the proud Mathilde.

'In the ordinary situations of life she has no belief in religion,' thought Julien; 'she values it as being very useful to the interests of her caste.

‘But out of simple delicacy may she not be bitterly reproaching herself with the mistake that she has made?’ Julien assumed that he was her first lover.

‘But,’ he said to himself at other moments, ‘one must admit that there is nothing artless, simple, tender, in her attitude; never have I seen her looking so haughty. Can she despise me? It would be like her to reproach herself with what she has done for me, solely on account of my humble birth.’

While Julien, steeped in the prejudices he had derived from books and from memories of Verrieres, was pursuing the chimera of a tender mistress who never gives a thought to her own existence the moment she has gratified the desires of her lover, Mathilde in her vanity was furious with him.

As she had ceased to be bored for the last two months, she was no longer afraid of boredom; so, albeit he could not for a moment suspect it, Julien was deprived of his strongest advantage.

‘I have given myself a master!’ Mademoiselle de La Mole was saying to herself, in the grip of the blackest despond. ‘He may be the soul of honour; but if I goad his vanity to extremes, he will have his revenge by making public the nature of our relations.’ Mathilde had never had a lover, and at this epoch in life, which gives certain tender illusions to even the most sterile hearts, she was a prey to the bitterest reflections.

‘He has an immense power over me, since he reigns by terror and can inflict a fearful punishment on me if I drive him to extremes.’ This idea, by itself, was enough to provoke Mathilde to insult him. Courage was the fundamental quality in her character. Nothing was capable of giving her any excitement and of curing her of an ever-present tendency to boredom, but the idea that she was playing heads or tails with her whole existence.

On the third day, as Mademoiselle de La Mole persisted in not looking at him, Julien followed her after dinner, to her evident annoyance, into the billiard room.

‘Well, Sir; you must imagine yourself to have acquired some very powerful hold over me,’ she said to him, with ill-controlled rage, ‘since in opposition

to my clearly expressed wishes, you insist on speaking to me? Are you aware that nobody in the world has ever been so presumptuous?'

Nothing could be more entertaining than the dialogue between these two lovers; unconsciously they were animated by a mutual sentiment of the keenest hatred. As neither of them had a consistent nature, as moreover they were used to the ways of good society, it was not long before they both declared in plain terms that they had quarrelled for ever.

'I swear to you eternal secrecy,' said Julien; 'I would even add that I will never address a word to you again, were it not that your reputation might be injured by too marked a change.' He bowed respectfully and left her.

He performed without undue difficulty what he regarded as a duty; he was far from imagining himself to be deeply in love with Mademoiselle de La Mole. No doubt he had not been in love with her three days earlier, when he had been concealed in the great mahogany wardrobe. But everything changed rapidly in his heart from the moment when he saw himself parted from her for ever.

His pitiless memory set to work reminding him of the slightest incidents of that night which in reality had left him so cold.

During the very night after their vow of eternal separation, Julien nearly went mad when he found himself forced to admit that he was in love with Mademoiselle de La Mole.

A ghastly conflict followed this discovery: all his feelings were thrown into confusion.

Two days later, instead of being haughty with M. de Croisenois, he could almost have burst into tears and embraced him.

The force of continued unhappiness gave him a glimmer of common sense; he decided to set off for Languedoc, packed his trunk and went to the posting house.

He almost fainted when, on reaching the coach office, he was informed that, by mere chance, there was a place vacant next day in the Toulouse mail. He

engaged it and returned to the Hotel de La Mole to warn the Marquis of his departure.

M. de La Mole had gone out. More dead than alive, Julien went to wait for him in the library. What were his feelings on finding Mademoiselle de La Mole there?

On seeing him appear, she assumed an air of malevolence which it was impossible for him to misinterpret,

Carried away by his misery, dazed by surprise, Julien was weak enough to say to her, in the tenderest of tones and one that sprang from the heart: ‘Then, you no longer love me?’

‘I am horrified at having given myself to the first comer,’ said Mathilde, weeping with rage at herself.

‘To the first comer!’ cried Julien, and he snatched up an old mediaeval sword which was kept in the library as a curiosity.

His grief, which he had believed to be intense at the moment of his speaking to Mademoiselle de La Mole, had now been increased an hundredfold by the tears of shame which he saw her shed. He would have been the happiest of men had it been possible to kill her.

Just as he had drawn the sword, with some difficulty, from its antiquated scabbard, Mathilde, delighted by so novel a sensation, advanced proudly towards him; her tears had ceased to flow.

The thought of the Marquis de La Mole, his benefactor, arose vividly in Julien’s mind. ‘I should be killing his daughter!’ he said to himself; ‘how horrible!’ He made as though to fling away the sword. ‘Certainly,’ he thought, ‘she will now burst out laughing at the sight of this melodramatic gesture’: thanks to this consideration, he entirely regained his self-possession. He examined the blade of the old sword with curiosity, and as though he were looking for a spot of rust, then replaced it in its scabbard, and with the utmost calm hung it up on the nail of gilded bronze from which he had taken it.

This series of actions, very deliberate towards the end, occupied fully a minute; Mademoiselle de La Mole gazed at him in astonishment. ‘So I have been within an inch of being killed by my lover!’ she said to herself.

This thought carried her back to the bravest days of the age of Charles IX and Henri III.

She stood motionless before Julien who had now replaced the sword, she gazed at him with eyes in which there was no more hatred. It must be admitted that she was very attractive at that moment, certainly no woman had ever borne less resemblance to a Parisian doll (this label expressed Julien’s chief objection to the women of that city).

‘I am going to fall back into a fondness for him,’ thought Mathilde; ‘and then at once he would suppose himself to be my lord and master, after a relapse, and at the very moment when I have just spoken to him so firmly.’ She fled.

‘My God! How beautiful she is!’ said Julien, as he watched her run from the room: ‘that is the creature who flung herself into my arms with such frenzy not a week ago . . . And those moments will never come again! And it is my fault! And, at the moment of so extraordinary an action, and one that concerned me so closely, I was not conscious of it! . . . I must admit that I was born with a very dull and unhappy nature.’

The Marquis appeared; Julien made haste to inform him of his departure.

‘For where?’ said M. de La Mole.

‘For Languedoc.’

‘No, if you please, you are reserved for a higher destiny; if you go anywhere, it will be to the North . . . Indeed, in military parlance, I confine you to your quarters. You will oblige me by never being absent for more than two or three hours, I may need you at any moment.’

Julien bowed, and withdrew without uttering a word, leaving the Marquis greatly astonished; he was incapable of speech, and shut himself up in his room. There, he was free to exaggerate all the iniquity of his lot.

‘And so,’ he thought, ‘I cannot even go away! God knows for how many days the Marquis is going to keep me in Paris; great God! What is to become of me? And not a friend that I can consult; the abbe Pirard would not let me finish my first sentence, Conte Altamira would offer to enlist me in some conspiracy.

‘And meanwhile I am mad, I feel it; I am mad!

‘Who can guide me, what is to become of me?’

Chapter 18

Painful Moments

And she admits it to me! She goes into the minutest details! Her lovely eye fixed on mine reveals the love that she felt for another!

SCHILLER

Mademoiselle de La Mole, in an ecstasy, could think only of the felicity of having come within an inch of being killed. She went so far as to say to herself: ‘He is worthy to be my master, since he has been on the point of killing me. How many of the good-looking young men in society would one have to fuse together to arrive at such an impulse of passion?

‘One must admit that he did look handsome when he climbed on the chair, to replace the sword, precisely in the picturesque position which the decorator had chosen for it! After all, I was not such a fool to fall in love with him.’

At that moment, had any honourable way of renewing their relations presented itself, she would have seized it with pleasure. Julien, locked and double-locked in his room, was a prey to the most violent despair. In the height of his folly, he thought of flinging himself at her feet. If, instead of remaining hidden in a remote corner, he had wandered through the house and into the garden, so as to be within reach of any opportunity, he might perhaps in a single instant have converted his fearful misery into the keenest happiness.

But the adroitness with the want of which we are reproaching him would have debarred the sublime impulse of seizing the sword which, at that moment, made him appear so handsome in the eyes of Mademoiselle de La

Mole. This caprice, which told in Julien's favour, lasted for the rest of the day; Mathilde formed a charming impression of the brief moments during which she had loved him, and looked back on them with regret.

'Actually,' she said to herself, 'my passion for that poor boy lasted, in his eyes, only from one o'clock in the morning, when I saw him arrive by his ladder, with all his pistols in the side pocket of his coat, until eight. It was at a quarter past eight, when hearing mass at Sainte–Valere, that it first occurred to me that he would imagine himself to be my master, and might try to make me obey him by force of terror.'

After dinner, Mademoiselle de La Mole, far from avoiding Julien, spoke to him, and almost ordered him to accompany her to the garden; he obeyed. This proved too much for her self-control. Mathilde yielded, almost unconsciously, to the love which she began to feel for him. She found an intense pleasure in strolling by his side, it was with curiosity that she gazed at his hands which that morning had seized the sword to kill her.

After such an action, after all that had passed, there could no longer be any question of their conversing on the same terms as before.

Gradually Mathilde began to talk to him with an intimate confidence of the state of her heart. She found a strange delight in this kind of conversation; she proceeded to tell him of the fleeting impulses of enthusiasm which she had felt for M. de Croisenois, for M. de Caylus . . .

'What! For M. de Caylus as well!' cried Julien; and all the bitter jealousy of a past jilted lover was made manifest in his words. Mathilde received them in that light, and was not offended.

She continued to torture Julien, detailing her past feelings in the most picturesque fashion, and in accents of the most absolute sincerity. He saw that she was describing what was present before her eyes. He had the grief of remarking that as she spoke she made fresh discoveries in her own heart.

The agony of jealousy can go no farther.

The suspicion that a rival is loved is painful enough already, but to have the love that he inspires in her confessed to one in detail by the woman whom

one adores is without doubt the acme of suffering.

Oh, how she punished, at that moment, the impulse of pride which had led Julien to set himself above all the Caylus and Croisenois! With what an intense and heartfelt misery he now exaggerated their most trivial advantages! With what ardent sincerity he now despised himself!

Mathilde seemed adorable to him, language fails to express the intensity of his admiration. As he walked by her side, he cast furtive glances at her hands, her arms, her regal bearing. He was on the point of falling at her feet, crushed with love and misery, and crying: 'Pity!'

'And this creature who is so lovely, so superior to all the rest, who has once loved me, it is M. de Caylus whom, no doubt, she will presently be loving!'

Julien could not doubt Mademoiselle de La Mole's sincerity; the accent of truth was all too evident in everything that she said. That absolutely nothing might be wanting to complete his misery, there were moments when, by dint of occupying her mind with the sentiments which she had at one time felt for M. de Caylus, Mathilde was led to speak of him as though she loved him still. Certainly there was love in her accents, Julien could see it plainly.

Had his bosom been flooded with a mass of molten lead, he would have suffered less. How, arrived at this extreme pitch of misery, was the poor boy to guess that it was because she was talking to him that Mademoiselle de La Mole found such pleasure in recalling all the niceties of love that she had felt in the past for M. de Caylus or M. de Luz?

No words could express Julien's anguish. He was listening to the detailed confidences of the love felt for others in that same lime walk where, so few days since, he had waited for one o'clock to strike before making his way into her room. Human nature is incapable of enduring misery at a higher pitch than this.

This kind of cruel intimacy lasted for a whole week. Mathilde now appeared to seek, now did not shun opportunities of speaking to him; and the subject of conversation, to which they seemed both to return with a sort of torturing pleasure, was the recital of the sentiments that she had felt for others; she

recounted to him the letters that she had written, told him the very words of them, repeated whole sentences. On the final days she seemed to be studying Julien with a sort of malignant delight. His sufferings were a source of keen enjoyment to her.

We can see that Julien had no experience of life, he had not even read any novels; if he had been a little less awkward, and had said with a certain coldness to this girl, whom he so adored and who made him such strange confidences: ‘Admit that though I am not the equal of all these gentlemen, it is still myself that you love . . .’

Perhaps she would have been glad to have her secret guessed; at any rate his success would have depended entirely upon the grace with which Julien expressed this idea, and the moment that he chose. However that might be, he came out well, and yith advantage to himself, from a situation which was tending to become monotonous in Mathilde’s eyes.

‘And you no longer love me, me who adore you!’ Julien said |o her one day, desperate with love and misery. It was almost She worst blunder that he could have made.

This speech destroyed in an instant all the pleasure that lademoiselle de La Mole found in speaking to him of the state of her heart. She was beginning to feel astonished that after what had happened he did not take offence at her confidences, he was on the point of imagining, at the moment when he made this foolish speech, that perhaps he no longer loved her. ‘Pride has doubtless quenched his love,’ she said to herself. ‘He is not the man to see himself set with impunity beneath creatures like Caylus, de Luz, Croisenois, who he admits are so far his superiors. No, I shall never see him at my feet again!’

On the preceding days, in the artlessness of his misery, Julien had paid a heartfelt tribute to the brilliant qualities of these gentlemen; he went so far as to exaggerate them. This change of attitude had by no means escaped the notice of Mademoiselle de La Mole; it had surprised her, but she did not suspect the reason or it. Julien’s frenzied soul, in praising a rival whom he believed to be loved, sympathised with that rival in his good fortune.

This speech, so frank but so stupid, altered the whole situation an instant: Mathilde, certain of being loved, despised him completely.

She was strolling with him at the moment of this unfortunate utterance; she left him, and her final glance was expressive of the most bitter scorn. Returning to the drawing-room, for the rest of the evening she never looked at him again. Next day, this scorn of him had entire possession of her heart; there was no longer any question of the impulse which, for a whole week, had made her find such pleasure in treating Julien as her most intimate friend; the sight of him was repulsive to her. Mathilde's feeling reached the point of disgust; no words could express the intensity of the scorn that she felt when her eyes happened to fall on him.

Julien had understood nothing of all that had been happening in Mathilde's heart, but for the past week he discerned her scorn. He had the good sense to appear in her presence as rarely as possible, and never looked her in the face.

But it was not without a mortal anguish that he deprived himself to some extent of her company. He thought he could feel that his misery was thereby actually increased. 'The courage of a man's heart can go no farther,' he told himself. He spent all his time at a little window in the attics of the house; the shutters were carefully closed, and from there, at least, he could catch a glimpse of Mademoiselle de La Mole when she appeared in the garden.

What were his feelings when, after dinner, he saw her strolling with M. de Caylus, M. de Luz or any of the others for whom she had avowed some slight amorous inclination in the past?

Julien had had no idea of such an intensity of misery; he was on the point of crying aloud; that resolute heart was at last reduced to utter helplessness.

Any thought that was not of Mademoiselle de La Mole had become odious to him; he was incapable of writing the most simple letters.

'You are crazy,' the Marquis said to him.

Julien, trembling with fear of a disclosure, pleaded illness and managed to make himself believed. Fortunately for him, the Marquis teased him at dinner over his coming journey: Mathilde gathered that it might be

prolonged. For several days now Julien had been avoiding her, and the brilliant young men who had everything that was lacking in this creature so pale and sombre, once loved by her, had no longer the power to distract her from her dreams.

‘An ordinary girl,’ she said to herself, ‘would have sought for the man of her choice among the young fellows who attract every eye in a drawing-room; but one of the characteristics of genius is not to let its thoughts move in the rut traced by the common herd.

‘As the partner of such a man as Julien, who lacks nothing but the fortune which I possess, I shall continue to attract attention, I shall by no means pass unperceived through life. So far from incessantly dreading a Revolution like my cousins, who, in their fear of the people, dare not scold a postilion who drives them badly, I shall be certain of playing a part and a great part, for the man of my choice has character and an unbounded ambition. What does he lack? Friends? Money? I can give him all that.’ But in her thoughts she treated Julien rather as an inferior being who can be made to love one when one wills.

Chapter 19

The Opera–Bouffe

O how this spring of love resembleth

The uncertain glory of an April day;

Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,

And by and by a cloud takes all away!

SHAKESPEARE

Occupied with thoughts of the future and of the singular part which she hoped to play, Mathilde soon came to look back with regret upon the dry, metaphysical discussions which she often had with Julien. Wearied with keeping her thoughts on so high a plane, sometimes also she would sigh for the moments of happiness which she had found in his company; these memories were not untouched by remorse, which at certain moments overwhelmed her.

‘But if one has a weakness,’ she said to herself, ‘it is incumbent upon a girl like myself to forget her duties only for a man of merit; people will not be able to say that it was his handsome moustaches or his elegant seat on a horse that seduced me, but his profound discussions of the future in store for France, his ideas as to the resemblance the events that are going to burst upon us may bear to the Revolution of 1688 in England. I have been seduced,’ she answered the voice of remorse, ‘I am a weak woman, but at least I have not been led astray like a puppet by outward advantages.

‘If there be a Revolution, why should not Julien Sorel play the part of Roland, and I that of Madame Roland? I prefer that to the part of Madame de Stael: immoral conduct will be an obstacle in our time. Certainly they shall not reproach me with a second lapse; I should die of shame.’

Mathilde’s meditations were not all as grave, it must be admitted, as the thoughts we have just transcribed.

She would look at Julien, and found a charming grace in his most trivial actions.

‘No doubt,’ she said to herself, ‘I have succeeded in destroying every idea in his mind that he has certain rights.

‘The air of misery and profound passion with which the poor boy addressed those words of love to me a week ago, is proof positive; I must confess that it was extraordinary in me to be vexed by a speech so fervent with respect and passion. Am I not his wife? That speech was only natural, and, I am bound to say, quite agreeable. Julien still loved me after endless conversations, in which I had spoken to him, and with great cruelty, I admit, only of the feelings of love which the boredom of the life I lead had inspired in me for the young men in society of whom he is so jealous. Ah, if he knew how little danger there is in them for me! How lifeless they seem to me when compared with him, all copies of each other.’

As she made these reflections, Mathilde was tracing lines with a pencil at random on a page of her album. One of the profiles as she finished it startled and delighted her: it bore a striking resemblance to Julien. ‘It is the voice of heaven! This is one of the miracles of love,’ she cried in a transport, ‘quite unconsciously I have drawn his portrait.’

She fled to her room, locked herself in, set to work, tried seriously to make a portrait of Julien, but could not succeed; the profile drawn at random was still the best likeness. Mathilde was enchanted; she saw in it a clear proof of her grand passion.

She did not lay aside her album until late in the evening, when the Marquise sent for her to go to the Italian opera. She had only one idea, to catch Julien’s

eye, so as to make her mother invite him to join them.

He did not appear; the ladies had only the most commonplace people in their box. During the whole of the first act of the opera, Mathilde sat dreaming of the man whom she loved with transports of the most intense passion; but in the second act a maxim of love sung, it must be admitted, to a melody worthy of Cimarosa, penetrated her heart. The heroine of the opera said: 'I must be punished for all the adoration that I feel for him, I love him too well!'

The moment she had heard this sublime cantilena, everything that existed in the world vanished from Mathilde's ken. People spoke to her; she did not answer; her mother scolded her, it was all she could do to look at her. Her ecstasy reached a state of exaltation and passion comparable to the most violent emotions that, during the last few days, Julien had felt for her. The cantilena, divinely graceful, to which was sung the maxim that seemed to her to bear so striking an application to her own situation, occupied every moment in which she was not thinking directly of Julien. Thanks to her love of music, she became that evening as Madame de Renal invariably was when thinking of him. Love born in the brain is more spirited, doubtless, than true love, but it has only flashes of enthusiasm; it knows itself too well, it criticises itself incessantly; so far from banishing thought, it is itself reared only upon a structure of thought.

On her return home, in spite of anything that Madame de La Mole might say, Mathilde alleged an attack of fever, and spent part of the night playing over the cantilena on her piano. She sang the words of the famous aria which had charmed her:

Devo punirmi, devo punirmi, Se troppo amai.

The result of this night of madness was that she imagined herself to have succeeded in conquering her love. (This page will damage the unfortunate author in more ways than one. The frigid hearts will accuse it of indecency. It does not offer the insult to the young persons who shine in the drawing-rooms of Paris, of supposing that a single one of their number is susceptible to the mad impulses which degrade the character of Mathilde. This character is wholly imaginary, and is indeed imagined quite apart from the social

customs which among all the ages will assure so distinguished a place to the civilisation of the nineteenth century.

It is certainly not prudence that is lacking in the young ladies who have been the ornament of the balls this winter.

Nor do I think that one can accuse them of unduly despising a brilliant fortune, horses, fine properties, and everything that ensures an agreeable position in society. So far from their seeing nothing but boredom in all these advantages, they are as a rule the object of their most constant desires, and if there is any passion in their hearts it is for them.

Neither is it love that provides for the welfare of young men endowed with a certain amount of talent like Julien; they attach themselves inseparably to a certain set, and when the set 'arrives', all the good things of society rain upon them. Woe to the student who belongs to no set, even his minute and far from certain successes will be made a reproach to him, and the higher virtue will triumph over him as it robs him. Ah, Sir, a novel is a mirror carried along a high road. At one moment it reflects to your vision the azure skies, at another the mire of the puddles at your feet. And the man who carries this mirror in his pack will be accused by you of being immoral! His mirror shows the mire, and you blame the mirror! Rather blame that high road upon which the puddle lies, still more the inspector of roads who allows the water to gather and the puddle to form.

Now that it is quite understood that the character of Mathilde is impossible in our age, no less prudent than virtuous, I am less afraid of causing annoyance by continuing the account of the follies of this charming girl.)

Throughout the whole of the day that followed she looked out for opportunities to assure herself that she had indeed conquered her insane passion. Her main object was to displease Julien in every way; but none of her movements passed unperceived by him.

Julien was too wretched and above all, too greatly agitated, to interpret so complicated a stratagem of passion, still less could he discern all the promise that it held out to himself: he fell a victim to it; never perhaps had his misery been so intense. His actions were so little under the control of his mind that

if some morose philosopher had said to him: ‘Seek to take advantage rapidly of a disposition which for the moment is favourable to you; in this sort of brain-fed love, which we see in Paris, the same state of mind cannot continue for more than a couple of days,’ he would not have understood. But, excited as he might be, Julien had a sense of honour. His first duty was discretion; so much he did understand. To ask for advice, to relate his agony to the first comer would have been a happiness comparable to that of the wretch who, crossing a burning desert, receives from the sky a drop of ice-cold water. He was aware of the danger, he was afraid of answering with a torrent of tears the indiscreet person who should question him; he closeted himself in his room.

He saw Mathilde strolling late and long in the garden; when at length she had left it, he went down there; he made his way to a rose tree from which she had plucked a rose.

The night was dark, he could indulge the full extent of his misery without fear of being seen. It was evident to him that Mademoiselle de La Mole was in love with one of those young officers to whom she had been chattering so gaily. He himself had been loved by her, but she had seen how slight were his merits.

‘And indeed, they are slight!’ Julien told himself with entire conviction; ‘I am, when all is said, a very dull creature, very common, very tedious to others, quite insupportable to myself.’ He was sick to death of all his own good qualities, of all the things that he had loved with enthusiasm; and in this state of inverted imagination he set to work to criticise life with his imagination. This is an error that stamps a superior person.

More than once the idea of suicide occurred to him; this image was full of charm, it was like a delicious rest; it was the glass of ice-cold water offered to the wretch who, in the desert, is dying of thirst and heat.

‘My death will increase the scorn that she feels for me!’ he exclaimed. ‘What a memory I shall leave behind me!’

Sunk into the nethermost abyss of misery, a human being has no resource left but courage. Julien had not wisdom enough to say to himself: ‘I must

venture all'; but as he looked up at the window of Mathilde's room, he could see through the shutters that she was putting out her light: he pictured to himself that charming room which he had seen, alas, once only in his life. His imagination went no farther.

One o'clock struck; from hearing the note of the bell to saying to himself: 'I am going up by the ladder,' did not take a moment.

This was a flash of genius, cogent reasons followed in abundance. 'Can I possibly be more wretched?' he asked himself. He ran to the ladder, the gardener had made it fast with a chain. With the hammer of one of his pocket pistols, which he broke, Julien, animated for the moment by a superhuman force, wrenched open one of the iron links of the chain which bound the ladder; in a few minutes it was free, and he had placed it against Mathilde's window.

'She will be angry, will heap contempt upon me, what of that? I give her a kiss, a final kiss, I go up to my room and kill myself . . .; my lips will have touched her cheek before I die!'

He flew up the ladder, tapped at the shutter; a moment later Mathilde heard him, she tried to open the shutter, the ladder kept it closed. Julien clung to the iron latch intended to hold the shutter open, and, risking a thousand falls, gave the ladder a violent shake, and displaced it a little. Mathilde was able to open the shutter.

He flung himself into the room more dead than alive: 'So it is you!' she said, and fell into his arms . . .

* * *

What words can describe the intensity of Julien's happiness? Mathilde's was almost as great.

She spoke to him against herself, she accused herself to him.

‘Punish me for my atrocious pride,’ she said to him, squeezing him in her arms as though to strangle him; ‘you are my master, I am your slave, I must beg pardon upon my knees for having sought to rebel.’ She slipped from his embrace to fall at his feet. ‘Yes, you are my master,’ she said again, intoxicated with love and joy; ‘reign over me for ever, punish your slave severely when she seeks to rebel.’

In another moment she had torn herself from his arms, lighted the candle, and Julien had all the difficulty in the world in preventing her from cutting off all one side of her hair.

‘I wish to remind myself,’ she told him, ‘that I am your servant: should my accursed pride ever make me forget it, show me these locks and say: “There is no question now of love, we are not concerned with the emotion that your heart may be feeling at this moment, you have sworn to obey, obey upon your honour.”’

But it is wiser to suppress the description of so wild a felicity.

Julien’s chivalry was as great as his happiness; ‘I must go down now by the ladder,’ he said to Mathilde, when he saw the dawn appear over the distant chimneys to the east, beyond the gardens. The sacrifice that I am imposing on myself is worthy of you, I am depriving myself of some hours of the most astounding happiness that a human soul can enjoy, it is a sacrifice that I am offering to your reputation: if you know my heart you appreciate the effort that I have to make. Will you always be to me what you are at this moment? But the voice of honour speaks, it is enough. Let me tell you that, since our first meeting, suspicion has not been directed only against robbers. M. de La Mole has set a watch in the garden. M. de Croisenois is surrounded by spies, we know what he is, doing night by night . . .’

When she heard this idea, Mathilde burst out laughing. Her mother and one of the maids were aroused: immediately they called to her through the door. Julien looked at her, she turned pale as she scolded the maid, and did not condescend to speak to her mother.

‘But if it should occur to them to open the window, they will see the ladder!’ Julien said to her.

He clasped her once more in his arms, sprang on to the ladder and slid rather than climbed down it; in a moment he was on the ground.

Three seconds later the ladder was under the lime alley, and Mathilde's honour was saved. Julien, on recovering his senses, found himself bleeding copiously and half naked: he had cut himself in his headlong descent.

The intensity of his happiness had restored all the energy of his nature: had a score of men appeared before him, to attack them single-handed would, at that moment, have been but a pleasure the more. Fortunately, his martial valour was not put to the proof: he laid down the ladder in its accustomed place; he replaced the chain that fastened it; he did not forget to come back and obliterate the print which the ladder had left in the border of exotic flowers beneath Mathilde's window.

As in the darkness he explored the loose earth with his hand, to make sure that the mark was entirely obliterated, he felt something drop on his hand; it was a whole side of Mathilde's hair which she had clipped and threw down to him.

She was at her window.

'See what your servant sends you,' she said in audible tones, 'it is the sign of eternal obedience. I renounce the exercise of my own reason; be my master.'

Julien, overcome, was on the point of fetching back the ladder and mounting again to her room. Finally reason prevailed.

To enter the house from the garden was by no means easy. He succeeded in forcing the door of a cellar; once in the house he was obliged to break open, as silently as possible, the door of his own room. In his confusion he had left everything behind, including the key, which was in the pocket of his coat. 'Let us hope,' he thought, 'that she will remember to hide all that corpus delicti!'

Finally exhaustion overpowered happiness, and, as the sun rose, he fell into a profound slumber.

The luncheon bell just succeeded in waking him, he made his appearance in the dining-room. Shortly afterwards, Mathilde entered the room. Julien's pride tasted a momentary joy when he saw the love that glowed in the eyes of this beautiful creature, surrounded by every mark of deference; but soon his prudence found an occasion for alarm.

On the pretext of not having had time to dress her hair properly, Mathilde had so arranged it that Julien could see at a glance the whole extent of the sacrifice that she had made for him in clipping her locks that night. If anything could have spoiled so lovely a head, Mathilde would have succeeded in spoiling hers; all one side of those beautiful pale golden locks were cropped to within half an inch of her scalp.

At luncheon, Mathilde's whole behaviour was in keeping with this original imprudence. You would have said that she was deliberately trying to let everyone see the insane passion that she had for Julien. Fortunately, that day, M. de La Mole and the Marquise were greatly taken up with a list of forthcoming promotions to the Blue Riband, in which the name of M. de Chaulnes had not been included. Towards the end of the meal, Mathilde in talking to Julien addressed him as 'my master'. He coloured to the whites of his eyes.

Whether by accident or by the express design of Madame de La Mole, Mathilde was not left alone for an instant that day. In the evening, however, as she passed from the dining-room to the drawing-room, she found an opportunity of saying to Julien:

'I hope you do not think that it is my idea: Mamma has just decided that one of her maids is to sleep in my room.'

The day passed like lightning; Julien was on the highest pinnacle of happiness. By seven o'clock next morning he was installed in the library; he hoped that Mademoiselle de La Mole would deign to appear there; he had written her an endless letter.

He did not see her until several hours had passed, at luncheon. Her head was dressed on this occasion with the greatest pains; a marvellous art had been employed to conceal the gap left by the clipped locks. She looked once or

twice at Julien, but with polite, calm eyes; there was no longer any question of her calling him ‘my master’.

Julien could not breathe for astonishment . . . Mathilde found fault with herself for almost everything that she had done for him.

On mature reflection, she had decided that he was a creature, if not altogether common, at any rate not sufficiently conspicuous to deserve all the strange follies which she had ventured to commit for him. On the whole, she no longer thought of love; she was tired of love that day.

As for Julien, the emotions of his heart were those of a boy of sixteen. Harrowing doubt, bewilderment, despair, seized upon him by turns during this luncheon, which seemed to him to be everlasting.

As soon as he could decently rise from table, he flew rather than ran to the stable, saddled his horse himself and was off at a gallop; he was afraid of disgracing himself by some sign of weakness. ‘I must kill my heart by physical exhaustion,’ he said to himself as he galloped through the woods of Meudon. ‘What have I done, what have I said to deserve such disgrace?

‘I must do nothing, say nothing today,’ he decided as he returned to the house, ‘be dead in body as I am in spirit. Julien no longer lives, it is his corpse that is still stirring.’

Chapter 20

The Japanese Vase

His heart does not at first realise the whole extent of his misery: he is more disturbed than moved. But in proportion as his reason returns, he feels the depth of his misfortune. All the pleasures in life are as nothing to him, he can feel only the sharp points of the despair that is rending him. But what is the good of speaking of physical pain? What pain felt by the body alone is comparable to this?

JEAN-PAUL

The dinner bell rang, Julien had barely time to dress; he found Mathilde in the drawing-room urging her brother and M. de Croisenois not to go and spend the evening with Madame la Marechale de Fervaques.

She could hardly have been more seductive and charming with them. After dinner they were joined by M. de Luz, M. de Caylus and several of their friends. One would have said that Mademoiselle de La Mole had resumed, together with the observance of sisterly affection, that of the strictest conventions. Although the weather that evening was charming, she insisted that they should not go out to the garden; she was determined not to be lured away from the armchair in which Madame de La Mole was enthroned. The blue sofa was the centre of the group, as in winter.

Mathilde was out of humour with the garden, or at least it seemed to her to be utterly boring: it was associated with the memory of Julien.

Misery destroys judgment. Our hero made the blunder of clinging to that little cane chair which in the past had witnessed such brilliant triumphs. This

evening, nobody spoke to him; his presence passed as though unperceived or worse. Those of Mademoiselle de La Mole's friends who were seated near him at the end of the sofa made an affectation of turning their backs on him, or so he thought.

'It is a courtier's disgrace,' he concluded. He decided to study for a moment the people who were trying to crush him with their disdain.

M. de Luz's uncle held an important post in the King's Household, the consequence of which was that this gallant officer opened his conversation with each fresh arrival with the following interesting detail: His uncle had set off at seven o'clock for Saint–Cloud, and expected to spend the night there. This piece of news was introduced in the most casual manner, but it never failed to come out.

Upon observing M. de Croisenois with the severe eye of misery, Julien remarked the enormous influence which this worthy and amiable young man attributed to occult causes. So much so that he became moody and cross if he heard an event of any importance set down to a simple and quite natural cause. 'There is a trace of madness there,' Julien told himself. 'This character bears a striking resemblance to that of the Emperor Alexander, as Prince Korasoff described him to me.' During the first year of his stay in Paris, poor Julien, coming fresh from the Seminary, dazzled by the graces, so novel to him, of all these agreeable young men, could do nothing but admire them. Their true character was only now beginning to outline itself before his eyes.

'I am playing an undignified part here,' he suddenly decided. The next thing was how to leave his little cane chair in a fashion that should not be too awkward. He tried to think of one, he called for something original upon an imagination that was fully occupied elsewhere. He was obliged to draw upon his memory, which, it must be confessed, was by no means rich in resources of this order; the boy was still a thorough novice, so that his awkwardness was complete and attracted everyone's attention when he rose to leave the drawing-room. Misery was all too evident in his whole deportment. He had been playing the part for three quarters of an hour of a troublesome inferior from whom people do not take the trouble to conceal what they think of him.

The critical observations which he had been making at the expense of his rivals prevented him, however, from taking his misfortune too seriously; he retained, to give support to his pride, the memory of what had occurred the night before last. ‘Whatever the advantages they may have over me,’ he thought as he went into the garden by himself, ‘Mathilde has not been to any of them what, on two occasions in my life, she has deigned to be to me.’

His sagacity went no farther. He failed entirely to understand the character of the singular person whom chance had now made absolute mistress of his whole happiness.

He devoted the next day to killing himself and his horse with exhaustion. He made no further attempt, that evening, to approach the blue sofa to which Mathilde was faithful. He remarked that Comte Norbert did not so much as deign to look at him when they met in the house. ‘He must be making an extraordinary effort,’ he thought, ‘he who is naturally so polite.’

For Julien, sleep would have meant happiness. Despite his bodily exhaustion, memories of a too seductive kind began to invade his whole imagination. He had not the intelligence to see that by his long rides through the forests round Paris, acting only upon himself and in no way upon the heart or mind of Mathilde, he was leaving the arrangement of his destiny to chance.

It seemed to him that one thing would supply boundless comfort to his grief: namely to speak to Mathilde. And yet what could he venture to say to her?

This was the question upon which one morning at seven o’clock he was pondering deeply, when suddenly he saw her enter the library.

‘I know, Sir, that you desire to speak to me.’

‘Great God! Who told you that?’

‘I know it, what more do you want? If you are lacking in honour, you may ruin me, or at least attempt to do so; but this danger, which I do not regard as real, will certainly not prevent me from being sincere. I no longer love you, Sir; my wild imagination misled me . . .’

On receiving this terrible blow, desperate with love and misery, Julien tried to excuse himself. Nothing could be more absurd. Does one excuse oneself for failing to please? But reason no longer held any sway over his actions. A blind instinct urged him to postpone the decision of his fate. It seemed to him that so long as he was still speaking, nothing was definitely settled. Mathilde did not listen to his words, the sound of them irritated her, she could not conceive how he had the audacity to interrupt her.

The twofold remorse of her virtue and her pride made her, that morning, equally unhappy. She was more or less crushed by the frightful idea of having given certain rights over herself to a little cleric, the son of a peasant. 'It is almost,' she told herself in moments when she exaggerated her distress, 'as though I had to reproach myself with a weakness for one of the footmen.'

In bold and proud natures, it is only a step from anger with oneself to fury with other people; one's transports of rage are in such circumstances a source of keen pleasure.

In a moment, Mademoiselle de La Mole reached the stage of heaping on Julien the marks of the most intense scorn. She had infinite cleverness, and this cleverness triumphed in the art of torturing the self-esteem of others and inflicting cruel wounds upon them.

For the first time in his life, Julien found himself subjected to the action of a superior intelligence animated by the most violent hatred of himself. So far from entertaining the slightest idea of defending himself at that moment, he began to despise himself. Hearing her heap upon him such cruel marks of scorn, so cleverly calculated to destroy any good opinion that he might have of himself, he felt that Mathilde was right, and that she was not saying enough.

As for her, her pride found an exquisite pleasure in thus punishing herself and him for the adoration which she had felt a few days earlier.

She had no need to invent or to think for the first time of the cruel words which she now uttered with such complacence. She was only repeating what for the last week had been said in her heart by the counsel of the opposite party to love.

Every word increased Julien's fearful misery an hundredfold. He tried to escape, Mademoiselle de La Mole held him by the arm with a gesture of authority.

'Please to observe,' he said to her, 'that you are speaking extremely loud; they will hear you in the next room.'

'What of that!' Mademoiselle de La Mole retorted proudly, 'who will dare to say to me that he has heard me? I wish to rid your petty self-esteem for ever of the ideas which it may have formed of me.'

When Julien was able to leave the library, he was so astounded that he already felt his misery less keenly. 'Well! She no longer loves me,' he repeated to himself, speaking aloud as though to inform himself of his position. 'It appears that she loved me for a week or ten days, and I shall love her all my life.

'Is it really possible, she meant nothing, nothing at all to my heart, only a few days ago.'

The delights of satisfied pride flooded Mathilde's bosom; so she had managed to break with him for ever! The thought of so complete a triumph over so strong an inclination made her perfectly happy. 'And so this little gentleman will understand, and once for all, that he has not and never will have any power over me.' She was so happy that really she had ceased to feel any love at that moment.

After so atrocious, so humiliating a scene, in anyone less passionate than Julien, love would have become impossible. Without departing for a single instant from what she owed to herself, Mademoiselle de La Mole had addressed to him certain of those disagreeable statements, so well calculated that they can appear to be true, even when one remembers them in cold blood.

The conclusion that Julien drew at the first moment from so astonishing a scene was that Mathilde had an unbounded pride. He believed firmly that everything was at an end for ever between them, and yet, the following day, at luncheon, he was awkward and timid in her presence. This was a fault that

could not have been found with him until then. In small matters as in great, he knew clearly what he ought and wished to do, and carried it out.

That day, after luncheon, when Madame de La Mole asked him for a seditious and at the same time quite rare pamphlet, which her parish priest had brought to her secretly that morning, Julien, in taking it from a side table, knocked over an old vase of blue porcelain, the ugliest thing imaginable.

Madame de La Mole rose to her feet with a cry of distress and came across the room to examine the fragments of her beloved vase. ‘It was old Japan,’ she said, ‘it came to me from my great-aunt the Abbess of Chelles; it was a present from the Dutch to the Duke of Orleans when he was Regent and he gave it to his daughter . . .’

Mathilde had followed her mother, delighted to see the destruction of this blue vase which seemed to her horribly ugly. Julien stood silent and not unduly distressed; he saw Mademoiselle de La Mole standing close beside him.

‘This vase,’ he said to her, ‘is destroyed for ever; so is it with a sentiment which was once the master of my heart; I beg you to accept my apologies for all the foolish things it has made me do’; and he left the room.

‘Really, one would think,’ said Madame de La Mole as he went, ‘that this M. Sorel is proud and delighted with what he has done.’

This speech fell like a weight upon Mathilde’s heart. ‘It is true,’ she told herself, ‘my mother has guessed aright, such is the sentiment that is animating him.’ Then and then only ended her joy in the scene that she had made with him the day before. ‘Ah, well, all is at an end,’ she said to herself with apparent calm; ‘I am left with a great example; my mistake has been fearful, degrading! It will make me wise for all the rest of my life.’

‘Was I not speaking the truth?’ thought Julien; ‘why does the love that I felt for that madwoman torment me still?’

This love, so far from dying, as he hoped, was making rapid strides. ‘She is mad, it is true,’ he said to himself, ‘but is she any less adorable? Is it possible

for a girl to be more lovely? Everything that the most elegant civilisation can offer in the way of keen pleasures, was it not all combined to one's heart's content in Mademoiselle de La Mole?' These memories of past happiness took possession of Julien, and rapidly undid all the work of reason.

Reason struggles in vain against memories of this sort; its stern endeavours serve only to enhance their charm.

Twenty-four hours after the breaking of the old Japanese vase, Julien was decidedly one of the unhappiest of men.

Chapter 21

The Secret Note

For I saw everything that I am telling you; and if I may have been deceived when I saw it, I am most certainly not deceiving you in telling you of it.

From a Letter to the Author

The Marquis sent for him; M. de La Mole seemed rejuvenated, there was a gleam in his eye.

‘Let us hear a little about your memory,’ he said to Julien. ‘I am told it is prodigious! Could you learn four pages by heart and go and repeat them in London? But without altering a word!’

The Marquis was feverishly turning the pages of that morning’s Quotidienne, and seeking in vain to dissimulate a highly serious air, which Julien had never seen him display, not even when they were discussing the Frilair case.

Julien had by this time sufficient experience to feel that he ought to appear thoroughly deceived by the light manner that was being assumed for his benefit.

‘This number of the Quotidienne is perhaps not very amusing; but, if M. le Marquis will allow me, tomorrow morning I shall have the honour to recite it to him from beginning to end.’

‘What! Even the advertisements?’

‘Literally, and without missing a word.’

‘Do you give me your word for that?’ went on the Marquis with a sudden gravity.

‘Yes, Sir, only the fear of not keeping it might upset my memory.’

‘What I mean is that I forgot to ask you this question yesterday; I do not ask you on your oath never to repeat what you are about to hear; I know you too well to insult you in that way. I have answered for you, I am going to take you to a room where there will be twelve persons assembled; you will take note of what each of them says.

‘Do not be uneasy, it is not going to be a confused conversation, each one will speak in his turn, I do not mean a set speech,’ the Marquis went on, resuming the tone of careless superiority which came so naturally to him. ‘While we are talking, you will write down twenty pages or so; you will return here with me, we shall cut down those twenty pages to four. It is those four pages that you shall recite to me tomorrow morning instead of the whole number of the Quotidienne. You will then set off at once; you will have to take post like a young man who is travelling for his pleasure. Your object will be to pass unobserved by anyone. You will arrive in the presence of a great personage. There, you will require more skill. It will be a question of taking in everyone round him; for among his secretaries, among his servants, there are men in the pay of our enemies, who lie in wait for our agents to intercept them. You shall have a formal letter of introduction. When His Excellency looks at you, you will take out my watch here, which I am going to lend you for the journey. Take it now, while you are about it, and give me yours.

‘The Duke himself will condescend to copy out at your dictation the four pages which you will have learned by heart.

‘When this has been done, but not before, remember, you may, if His Excellency questions you, give him an account of the meeting which you are now about to attend.

‘One thing that will prevent you from feeling bored on your jorney is that between Paris and the residence of the Minister there are people who would ask for nothing better than to fire a shot at M. l’abbe Sorel. Then his mission

is at an end and I foresee a long delay; for, my dear fellow, how shall we hear of your death? Your zeal cannot go so far as to inform us of it.

‘Run off at once and buy yourself a complete outfit,’ the Marquis went on with a serious air. ‘Dress in the style of the year before last. This evening you will have to look a little shabby. On the journey, however, you will dress as usual. Does that surprise you, does your suspicious mind guess the reason? Yes, my friend, one of the venerable personages whom you are about to hear discuss is fully capable of transmitting information by means of which someone may quite possibly administer opium to you, if nothing worse, in the evening, in some respectable inn at which you will have called for supper.’

‘It would be better,’ said Julien, ‘to travel thirty leagues farther and avoid the direct route. My destination is Rome, I suppose . . .’

The Marquis assumed an air of haughty displeasure which Julien had not seen to so marked a degree since Bray-le-Haut.

‘That is what you shall learn, Sir, when I think fit to tell you. I do not like questions.’

‘It was not a question,’ replied Julien effusively: ‘I swear to you, Sir, I was thinking aloud, I was seeking in my own mind the safest route.’

‘Yes, it seems that your thoughts were far away. Never forget that an ambassador, one of your youth especially, ought not to appear to be forcing confidences.’

Julien was greatly mortified, he was in the wrong. His self-esteem sought for an excuse and could find none.

‘Understand then,’ M. de La Mole went on, ‘that people always appeal to their hearts when they have done something foolish.’

An hour later, Julien was in the Marquis’s waiting-room in the garb of an inferior, with old-fashioned clothes, a doubtfully clean neckcloth and something distinctly smug about his whole appearance.

At the sight of him, the Marquis burst out laughing, and then only was Julien's apology accepted.

'If this young man betrays me,' M. de La Mole asked himself, 'whom can I trust? And yet when it comes to action, one has to trust somebody. My son and his brilliant friends of the same kidney have honest hearts, and loyalty enough for a hundred thousand; if it were a question of fighting, they would perish on the steps of the throne, they know everything . . . except just what is required at the moment. Devil take me if I can think of one of them who could learn four pages by heart and travel a hundred leagues without being tracked. Norbert would know how to let himself be killed like his ancestors, but any conscript can do that . . .'

The Marquis fell into a profound meditation: 'And even being killed,' he said with a sigh, 'perhaps this Sorel would manage that as well as he . . .

'The carriage is waiting,' said the Marquis, as though to banish a vexatious thought.

'Sir,' said Julien, 'while they were altering this coat for me, I committed to memory the first page of today's Quotidienne.'

The Marquis took the paper, Julien repeated the page without a single mistake. 'Good,' said the Marquis, every inch the diplomat that evening; 'meanwhile this young man is not observing the streets through which we are passing.'

They arrived in a large room of a distinctly gloomy aspect, partly panelled and partly hung in green velvet. In the middle of the room, a scowling footman had just set up a large dinner-table, which he proceeded to convert into a writing table, by means of an immense green cloth covered with ink stains, a relic of some Ministry.

The master of the house was a corpulent man whose name was never uttered; Julien decided that his expression and speech were those of a man engaged in digestion.

At a sign from the Marquis, Julien had remained at the lower end of the table. To avoid drawing attention to himself he began to point the quills. He

counted out of the corner of his eye seven speakers, but he could see nothing more of them than their backs. Two of them appeared to him to be addressing M. de La Mole on terms of equality, the others seemed more or less deferential.

Another person entered the room unannounced. ‘This is strange,’ thought Julien, ‘no one is announced in this room. Can this precaution have been taken in my honour?’ Everyone rose to receive the newcomer. He was wearing the same extremely distinguished decoration as three of the men who were already in the room. They spoke in low tones. In judging the newcomer, Julien was restricted to what he could learn from his features and dress. He was short and stout, with a high complexion and a gleaming eye devoid of any expression beyond the savage glare of a wild boar.

Julien’s attention was sharply distracted by the almost immediate arrival of a wholly different person. This was a tall man, extremely thin and wearing three or four waistcoats. His eye was caressing, his gestures polished.

‘That is just the expression of the old Bishop of Besancon,’ thought Julien. This man evidently belonged to the Church, he did not appear to be more than fifty or fifty-five, no one could have looked more fatherly.

The young Bishop of Agde appeared, and seemed greatly surprised when, in making a survey of those present, his eye rested on Julien. He had not spoken to him since the ceremony at Bray-le-Haut. His look of surprise embarrassed and irritated Julien. ‘What,’ the latter said to himself, ‘is knowing a man to be always to my disadvantage? All these great gentlemen whom I have never seen before do not frighten me in the least, and the look in this young Bishop’s eyes freezes me! It must be admitted that I am a very strange and very unfortunate creature.’

A small and extremely dark man presently made a noisy entrance, and began speaking from the door; he had a sallow complexion and a slightly eccentric air. On the arrival of this pitiless talker, groups began to form, apparently to escape the boredom of listening to him.

As they withdrew from the fireplace they drew near to the lower end of the table, where Julien was installed. His expression became more and more

embarrassed, for now at last, in spite of all his efforts, he could not avoid hearing them, and however slight his experience might be, he realised the full importance of the matters that were being discussed without any attempt at concealment; and yet how careful the evidently exalted personages whom he saw before him ought to be to keep them secret.

Already, working as slowly as possible, Julien had pointed a score of quills; this resource must soon fail him. He looked in vain for an order in the eyes of M. de La Mole; the Marquis had forgotten him.

‘What I am doing is absurd,’ thought Julien as he pointed his pens; ‘but people who are so commonplace in appearance, and are entrusted by others or by themselves with such high interests, must be highly susceptible. My unfortunate expression has a questioning and scarcely respectful effect which would doubtless annoy them. If I lower my eyes too far I shall appear to be making a record of their talk.’

His embarrassment was extreme, he was hearing some strange things said.

Chapter 22

The Discussion

The republic — for every person today willing to sacrifice all to the common good, there are thousands and millions who know only their own pleasures and their vanity. One is esteemed in Paris for one's carriage, not for one's virtue.

NAPOLEON, Memorial

The footman burst in, announcing: 'Monsieur le Duc de —— .'

'Hold your tongue, you fool,' said the Duke as he entered the room. He said this so well, and with such majesty that Julien could not help thinking that knowing how to lose his temper with a footman was the whole extent of this great personage's knowledge. Julien raised his eyes and at once lowered them again. He had so clearly divined the importance of this new arrival that he trembled lest his glance should be thought an indiscretion.

This Duke was a man of fifty, dressed like a dandy, and treading as though on springs. He had a narrow head with a large nose, and a curved face which he kept thrusting forward. It would have been hard for anyone to appear at once so noble and so insignificant. His coming was a signal for the opening of the discussion.

Julien was sharply interrupted in his physiognomical studies by the voice of M. de La Mole. 'Let me present to you M. l'abbe Sorel,' said the Marquis. 'He is endowed with an astonishing memory; it was only an hour ago that I spoke to him of the mission with which he might perhaps be honoured, and,

in order to furnish us with a proof of his memory, he has learned by heart the first page of the Quotidienne.'

'Ah! The foreign news, from poor N —— ,' said the master of the house. He picked up the paper eagerly and, looking at Julien with a whimsical air, in the effort to appear important: 'Begin, Sir,' he said to him.

The silence was profound, every eye was fixed on Julien; he repeated his lesson so well that after twenty lines: 'That will do,' said the Duke. The little man with the boar's eyes sat down. He was the chairman for, as soon as he had taken his place, he indicated a card table to Julien, and made a sign to him to bring it up to his side. Julien established himself there with writing materials. He counted twelve people seated round the green cloth.

'M. Sorel,' said the Duke, 'retire to the next room. We shall send for you.'

The master of the house assumed an uneasy expression. 'The shutters are not closed,' he murmured to his neighbour. 'It is no use your looking out of the window,' he foolishly exclaimed to Julien. 'Here I am thrust into a conspiracy at the very least,' was the latter's thought. 'Fortunately, it is not one of the kind that end on the Place de Greve. Even if there were danger, I owe that and more to the Marquis. I should be fortunate, were it granted me to atone for all the misery which my follies may one day cause him!'

Without ceasing to think of his follies and of his misery, he studied his surroundings in such a way that he could never forget them. Only then did he remember that he had not heard the Marquis tell his footman the name of the street, and the Marquis had sent for a cab, a thing he never did.

Julien was left for a long time to his reflections. He was in a parlour hung in green velvet with broad stripes of gold. There was on the side-table a large ivory crucifix, and on the mantelpiece the book Du Pape, by M. de Maistre, with gilt edges, and magnificently bound. Julien opened it so as not to appear to be eavesdropping. Every now and then there was a sound of raised voices from the next room. At length the door opened, his name was called.

'Remember, Gentlemen,' said the chairman, 'that from this moment we are addressing the Duc de —— . This gentleman,' he said, pointing to Julien, 'is

a young Levite, devoted to our sacred cause, who will have no difficulty in repeating, thanks to his astonishing memory, our most trivial words.

‘Monsieur has the floor,’ he said, indicating the personage with the fatherly air, who was wearing three or four waistcoats. Julien felt that it would have been more natural to call him the gentleman with the waistcoats. He supplied himself with paper and wrote copiously.

(Here the author would have liked to insert a page of dots. ‘That will not look pretty,’ says the publisher, ‘and for so frivolous a work not to look pretty means death.’

‘Politics,’ the author resumes, ‘are a stone attached to the neck of literature, which, in less than six months, drowns it. Politics in the middle of imaginative interests are like a pistol-shot in the middle of a concert. The noise is deafening without being emphatic. It is not in harmony with the sound of any of the instruments. This mention of politics is going to give deadly offence to half my readers, and to bore the other half, who have already found far more interesting and emphatic politics in their morning paper.’

‘If your characters do not talk politics,’ the publisher retorts, ‘they are no longer Frenchmen of 1830, and your book ceases to hold a mirror, as you claim. . . . ‘)

Julien’s report amounted to twenty-six pages; the following is a quite colourless extract; for I have been obliged, as usual, to suppress the absurdities, the frequency of which would have appeared tedious or highly improbable. (Compare the Gazette des Tribunaux.)

The man with the waistcoats and the fatherly air (he was a Bishop, perhaps), smiled often, and then his eyes, between their tremulous lids, assumed a strange brilliance and an expression less undecided than was his wont. This personage, who was invited to speak first, before the Duke (‘but what Duke?’ Julien asked himself), apparently to express opinions and to perform the functions of Attorney General, appeared to Julien to fall into the uncertainty and absence of definite conclusions with which those officers are

often reproached. In the course of the discussion the Duke went so far as to rebuke him for this.

After several phrases of morality and indulgent philosophy, the man with the waistcoats said:

‘Noble England, guided by a great man, the immortal Pitt, spent forty thousand million francs in destroying the Revolution. If this assembly will permit me to express somewhat boldly a melancholy reflection, England does not sufficiently understand that with a man like Bonaparte, especially when one had had to oppose to him only a collection of good intentions, there was nothing decisive save personal measures . . .’

‘Ah! Praise of assassination again!’ said the master of the house with an uneasy air.

‘Spare us your sentimental homilies,’ exclaimed the chairman angrily; his boar’s eye gleamed with a savage light. ‘Continue,’ he said to the man with the waistcoats. The chairman’s cheeks and brow turned purple.

‘Noble England,’ the speaker went on, ‘is crushed today, for every Englishman, before paying for his daily bread, is obliged to pay the interest on the forty thousand million francs which were employed against the Jacobins. She has no longer a Pitt . . .’

‘She has the Duke of Wellington,’ said a military personage who assumed an air of great importance.

‘Silence, please, Gentlemen,’ cried the chairman; ‘if we continue to disagree, there will have been no use in our sending for M. Sorel.’

‘We know that Monsieur is full of ideas,’ said the Duke with an air of vexation and a glance at the interrupter, one of Napoleon’s Generals. Julien saw that this was an allusion to something personal and highly offensive. Everyone smiled; the turncoat General seemed beside himself with rage.

‘There is no longer a Pitt,’ the speaker went on, with the discouraged air of a man who despairs of making his hearers listen to reason. ‘Were there a fresh

Pitt in England, one does not hoodwink a nation twice by the same means . . .'

'That is why a conquering General, a Bonaparte is impossible now in France,' cried the military interrupter.

On this occasion, neither the chairman nor the Duke dared show annoyance, though Julien thought he could read in their eyes that they were tempted to do so. They lowered their eyes, and the Duke contented himself with a sigh loud enough to be audible to them all.

But the speaker had lost his temper.

'You are in a hurry for me to conclude,' he said with heat, entirely discarding that smiling politeness and measured speech which Julien had assumed to be the natural expression of his character: 'you are in a hurry for me to conclude; you give me no credit for the efforts that I am making not to offend the ears of anyone present, however long they may be. Very well, Gentlemen, I shall be brief.

'And I shall say to you in the plainest of words: England has not a halfpenny left for the service of the good cause. Were Pitt to return in person, with all his genius he would not succeed in hoodwinking the small landowners of England, for they know that the brief campaign of Waterloo cost them, by itself, one thousand million francs. Since you wish for plain speaking,' the speaker added, growing more and more animated, 'I shall say to you: Help yourselves, for England has not a guinea for your assistance, and if England does not pay, Austria, Russia, Prussia, which have only courage and no money, cannot support more than one campaign or two against France.

'You may hope that the young soldiers collected by Jacobinism will be defeated in the first campaign, in the second perhaps; but in the third (though I pass for a revolutionary in your prejudiced eyes), in the third you will have the soldiers of 1794, who were no longer the recruited peasants of 1792.'

Here the interruption broke out in three or four places at once.

'Sir,' said the chairman to Julien, 'go and make a fair copy in the next room of the first part of the report which you have taken down.' Julien left the

room with considerable regret. The speaker had referred to probabilities which formed the subject of his habitual meditations.

‘They are afraid of my laughing at them,’ he thought. When he was recalled, M. de La Mole was saying, with an earnestness, which, to Julien, who knew him, seemed highly amusing:

‘Yes, Gentlemen, it is above all of this unhappy race that one can say: “Shall it be a god, a table or a bowl?”

‘“It shall be a god!” cries the poet. It is to you, Gentlemen, that this saying, so noble and so profound, seems to apply. Act for yourselves, and our noble France will reappear more or less as our ancestors made her and as our own eyes beheld her before the death of Louis XVI.

‘England, her noble Lords at least, curses as heartily as we ignoble Jacobinism: without English gold, Austria, Russia, Prussia cannot fight more than two or three battles. Will that suffice to bring about a glorious occupation, like that which M. de Richelieu squandered so stupidly in 1817? I do not think so.’

At this point an interruption occurred, but it was silenced by a general murmur. It arose once more from the former Imperial General, who desired the Blue Riband, and was anxious to appear among the compilers of the secret note.

‘I do not think so,’ M. de La Mole resumed after the disturbance. He dwelt upon the word ‘I’ with an insolence which charmed Julien. ‘That is well played,’ he said to himself as he made his pen fly almost as fast as the Marquis’s utterance. With a well-placed word, M. de La Mole annihilated the twenty campaigns of the turncoat.

‘It is not to foreigners alone,’ the Marquis continued in the most measured tone, ‘that we can remain indebted for a fresh military occupation. That youthful band who contribute incendiary articles to the Globe will provide you with three or four thousand young captains, among whom may be found a Kleber, a Hoche, a Jourdan, a Pichegru, but less well-intentioned.’

‘We did wrong in not crowning him with glory,’ said the chairman, ‘we ought to have made him immortal.’

‘There must, in short, be two parties in France,’ went on M. de La Mole, ‘but two parties, not in name only, two parties clearly defined, sharply divided. Let us be certain whom we have to crush. On one side the journalists, the electors, public opinion; in a word, youth and all those who admire it. While it is dazed by the sound of its own idle words, we, we have the certain advantage of handling the budget.’

Here came a fresh interruption.

‘You, Sir,’ M. de La Mole said to the interrupter with a supercilious ease that was quite admirable, ‘you do not handle, since the word appears to shock you, you devour forty thousand francs borne on the state budget and eighty thousand which you receive from the Civil List.

‘Very well, Sir, since you force me to it, I take you boldly as an example. Like your noble ancestors who followed Saint Louis to the Crusade, you ought, for those hundred and twenty thousand francs, to let us see at least a regiment, a company, shall I say a half-company, were it composed only of fifty men ready to fight, and devoted to the good cause, alive or dead. You have only footmen who, in the event of a revolt, would frighten nobody but yourself.

The Throne, the Altar, the Nobility may perish any day, Gentlemen, so long as you have not created in each Department a force of five hundred devoted men; devoted, I mean, not only with all the gallantry of France but with the constancy of Spain.

‘One half of this troop will have to be composed of our sons, our nephews, in short of true gentlemen. Each of them will have by his side, not a glib little cockney ready to hoist the striped cockade if another 1815 should arrive, but an honest peasant, simple and open like Cathelineau; our gentleman will have trained him, it should be his foster-brother, if possible. Let each of us sacrifice the fifth part of his income to form this little devoted troop of five hundred men to a Department. Then you may count upon a foreign occupation. Never will the foreign soldier cross our borders as far as

Dijon even, unless he is certain of finding five hundred friendly soldiers in each Department.

‘The foreign Kings will listen to you only when you can inform them that there are twenty thousand gentlemen ready to take up arms to open to them the gates of France. This service is arduous, you will say. Gentlemen, it is the price of our heads. Between the liberty of the press and our existence as gentlemen, there is war to the knife. Become manufacturers, peasants, or take up your guns. Be timid if you like, but do not be stupid. Open your eyes.

‘Form your battalions, I say to you, in the words of the Jacobin song; then there will appear some noble Gustavus–Adolphus, who, moved by the imminent peril to the monarchical principle will come flying three hundred leagues beyond his borders, and do for you what Gustavus did for the Protestant princes. Do you propose to go on talking without acting? In fifty years there will be nothing in Europe but Presidents of Republics, not one King left. And with those four letters K-I-N-G, go the priests and the gentlemen. I can see nothing but candidates paying court to draggletailed majorities.

‘It is no use your saying that France has not at this moment a trustworthy General, known and loved by all, that the army is organised only in the interests of Throne and Altar, that all the old soldiers have been discharged from it, whereas each of the Prussian and Austrian regiments includes fifty non-commissioned officers who have been under fire.

‘Two hundred thousand young men of the middle class are in love with the idea of war. . . .’

‘Enough unpleasant truths,’ came in a tone of importance from a grave personage, apparently high on the ladder of ecclesiastical preferment, for M. de La Mole smiled pleasantly instead of showing annoyance, which was highly significant to Julien.

‘Enough unpleasant truths; Gentlemen, to sum up: the man with whom it was a question of amputating his gangrened leg would be ill-advised to say

to his surgeon: this diseased leg is quite sound. Pardon me the simile, Gentlemen, the noble Duke of —— is our surgeon.'†

† The Duke of Wellington. C. K. S. M.]

'There is the great secret out at last,' thought Julien; 'it is to the —— that I shall be posting tonight.'

Chapter 23

The Clergy, their Forests, Liberty

The first law for every creature is that of self-preservation, of life. You sow hemlock, and expect to see the corn ripen!

MACHIAVELLI

The grave personage continued; one could see that he knew; he set forth with a gentle and moderate eloquence, which vastly delighted Julien, the following great truths:

(1) England has not a guinea at our service; economy and Hume are the fashion there. Even the Saints will not give us any money, and Mr Brougham will laugh at us.

(2,) Impossible to obtain more than two campaigns from the Monarchs of Europe, without English gold; and two campaigns will not be enough against the middle classes.

(3) Necessity of forming an armed party in France, otherwise the monarchical principle in the rest of Europe will not risk even those two campaigns.

‘The fourth point which I venture to suggest to you as self-evident is this:

‘The impossibility of forming an armed party in France without the Clergy. I say it to you boldly, because I am going to prove it to you, Gentlemen. We must give the Clergy everything:

‘(i) Because, occupying themselves with their own business night and day, and guided by men of high capacity established out of harm’s way three hundred leagues from your frontiers . . .’

‘Ah! Rome! Rome!’ exclaimed the master of the house . . .

‘Yes, Sir, Rome!’ the Cardinal answered proudly. ‘Whatever be the more or less ingenious pleasantries which were in fashion when you were young, I will proclaim boldly, in 1830, that the Clergy, guided by Rome, speak and speak alone to the lower orders.

‘Fifty thousand priests repeat the same words on the day indicated by their leaders, and the people, who, after all, furnish the soldiers, will be more stirred by the voice of their priests than by all the cheap poems in the world. . ..’ (This personal allusion gave rise to murmurs.)

‘The Clergy have an intellect superior to yours,’ the Cardinal went on, raising his voice; ‘all the steps that you have taken towards this essential point, having an armed party here in France, have been taken by us.’ Here facts were cited. Who had sent eighty thousand muskets to the Vendee? and so forth.

‘So long as the Clergy are deprived of their forests, they have no tenure. At the first threat of war, the Minister of Finance writes to his agents that there is no more money except for the parish priests. At heart, France is not religious, and loves war. Whoever it be that gives her war, he will be doubly popular, for to make war is to starve the Jesuits, in vulgar parlance; to make war is to deliver those monsters of pride, the French people, from the menace of foreign intervention.’

The Cardinal had a favourable hearing . . . ‘It was essential,’ he said, ‘that M. de Nerval should leave the Ministry, his name caused needless irritation.’

Upon this, they all rose to their feet and began speaking at once. ‘They will be sending me out of the room again,’ thought Julien; but the prudent chairman himself had forgotten Julien’s presence and indeed his existence.

Every eye turned to a man whom Julien recognised. It was M. de Nerval, the First Minister, whom he had seen at the Duc de Retz’s ball.

The disorder was at its height, as the newspapers say, when reporting the sittings of the Chamber. After fully a quarter of an hour, silence began to be restored.

Then M. de Nerval rose and, adopting the tone of an Apostle:

'I shall not for one moment pretend,' he said, in an unnatural voice, 'that I am not attached to office.

'It has been proved to me, Gentlemen, that my name doubles the strength of the Jacobins by turning against us a number of moderate men. I should willingly resign, therefore; but the ways of the Lord are visible to but a small number; but,' he went on, looking fixedly at the Cardinal, 'I have a mission; heaven has said to me: "You shall lay down your head on the scaffold, or you shall reestablish the Monarchy in France, and reduce the Chambers to what Parliament was under Louis XV," and that, Gentlemen, I will do.'

He ceased, sat down, and a great silence fell.

'There is a good actor,' thought Julien. He made the mistake, then as always, of crediting people with too much cleverness.

Animated by the debates of so lively an evening, and above all by the sincerity of the discussion, at that moment M. de Nerval believed in his mission. With his great courage the man did not combine any sense.

Midnight struck during the silence that followed the fine peroration 'that I will do'. Julien felt that there was something imposing and funereal in the sound of the clock. He was deeply moved.

The discussion soon began again with increasing energy and above all with an incredible simplicity. 'These men will have me poisoned,' thought Julien, at certain points. 'How can they say such things before a plebeian?'

Two o'clock struck while they were still talking. The master of the house had long been asleep; M. de La Mole was obliged to ring to have fresh candles brought in. M. de Nerval, the Minister, had left at a quarter to two, not without having frequently studied Julien's face in a mirror which hung beside him. His departure had seemed to create an atmosphere of relief.

While the candles were being changed: ‘Heaven knows what that fellow is going to say to the King!’ the man with the waistcoats murmured to his neighbour. ‘He can make us look very foolish and spoil our future.

‘You must admit that he shows a very rare presumption, indeed effrontery, in appearing here. He used to come here before he took office; but a portfolio alters everything, swallows up all a man’s private interests, he ought to have felt that.’

As soon as the Minister was gone, Bonaparte’s General had shut his eyes. He now spoke of his health, his wounds, looked at his watch, and left.

‘I would bet,’ said the man with the waistcoats, ‘that the General is running after the Minister; he is going to make his excuses for being found here, and pretend that he is our leader.’

When the servants, who were half asleep, had finished changing the candles:

‘Let us now begin to deliberate, Gentlemen,’ said the chairman, ‘and no longer attempt to persuade one another. Let us consider the tenor of the note that in forty-eight hours will be before the eyes of our friends abroad. There has been reference to Ministers. We can say, now that M. de Nerval has left us, what do we care for Ministers? We shall control them.’

The Cardinal showed his approval by a delicate smile.

‘Nothing easier, it seems to me, than to sum up our position,’ said the young Bishop of Agde with the concentrated and restrained fire of the most exalted fanaticism. Hitherto he had remained silent; his eye, which Julien had watched, at first mild and calm, had grown fiery after the first hour’s discussion. Now his heart overflowed like lava from Vesuvius.

‘From 1806 to 1814, England made only one mistake,’ he said, ‘which was her not dealing directly and personally with Napoleon. As soon as that man had created Dukes and Chamberlains, as soon as he had restored the Throne, the mission that God had entrusted to him was at an end; he was ripe only for destruction. The Holy Scriptures teach us in more than one passage the way to make an end of tyrants.’ (Here followed several Latin quotations.)

‘Today, Gentlemen, it is not a man that we must destroy; it is Paris. The whole of France copies Paris. What is the use of arming your five hundred men in each Department? A hazardous enterprise and one that will never end. What is the use of involving France in a matter which is peculiar to Paris? Paris alone, with her newspapers and her drawing-rooms, has done the harm; let the modern Babylon perish.

‘Between the Altar and Paris, there must be a fight to the finish. This catastrophe is indeed to the earthly advantage of the Throne. Why did not Paris dare to breathe under Bonaparte? Ask the artillery of Saint–Roch.’

* * *

It was not until three o’clock in the morning that Julien left the house with M. de La Mole.

The Marquis was depressed and tired. For the first time, in speaking to Julien, he used a tone of supplication. He asked him to promise never to disclose the excesses of zeal, such was his expression, which he had chanced to witness. ‘Do not mention it to our friend abroad, unless he deliberately insists on knowing the nature of our young hotheads. What does it matter to them if the State be overthrown? They will be Cardinals, and will take refuge in Rome. We, in our country seats, shall be massacred by the peasants.’

The secret note which the Marquis drafted from the long report of six and twenty pages, written by Julien, was not ready until a quarter to five.

‘I am dead tired,’ said the Marquis, ‘and so much can be seen from this note, which is lacking in precision towards the end; I am more dissatisfied with it than with anything I ever did in my life. Now, my friend,’ he went on, ‘go and lie down for a few hours, and for fear of your being abducted, I am going to lock you into your room.’

Next day, the Marquis took Julien to a lonely mansion, at some distance from Paris. They found there a curious company who, Julien decided, were priests. He was given a passport which bore a false name, but did at last indicate the true goal of his journey, of which he had always feigned ignorance. He started off by himself in a calash.

The Marquis had no misgivings as to his memory, Julien had repeated the text of the secret note to him several times; but he was greatly afraid of his being intercepted.

'Remember, whatever you do, to look like a fop who is travelling to kill time,' was his friendly warning, as Julien was leaving the room. 'There may perhaps have been several false brethren in our assembly last night.'

The journey was rapid and very tedious. Julien was barely out of the Marquis's sight before he had forgotten both the secret note and his mission, and was thinking of nothing but Mathilde's scorn.

In a village, some leagues beyond Metz, the postmaster came to inform him that there were no fresh horses. It was ten o'clock at night; Julien, greatly annoyed, ordered supper. He strolled up and down outside the door and passed unperceived into the stable-yard. He saw no horses there.

'The man had a singular expression all the same,' he said to himself; 'his coarse eye was scrutinising me.'

We can see that he was beginning not to believe literally everything that he was told. He thought of making his escape after supper, and in the meanwhile, in order to learn something of the lie of the land, left his room to go and warm himself by the kitchen fire. What was his joy upon finding there Signor Geronimo, the famous singer!

Comfortably ensconced in an armchair which he had made them push up close to the fire, the Neapolitan was groaning aloud and talking more, by himself, than the score of German peasants who were gathered round him open-mouthed.

'These people are ruining me,' he cried to Julien, 'I have promised to sing tomorrow at Mayence. Seven Sovereign Princes have assembled there to

hear me. But let us take the air,' he added, in a significant tone.

When he had gone a hundred yards along the road, and was well out of earshot:

'Do you know what is happening?' he said to Julien; 'this postmaster is a rogue. As I was strolling about, I gave a franc to a little ragamuffin who told me everything. There are more than a dozen horses in a stable at the other end of the village. They mean to delay some courier.'

'Indeed?' said Julien, with an innocent air.

It was not enough to have discovered the fraud, they must get on: this was what Geronimo and his friend could not manage to do. 'We must wait for the daylight,' the singer said finally, 'they are suspicious of us. Tomorrow morning we shall order a good breakfast; while they are preparing it we go out for a stroll, we escape, hire fresh horses, and reach the next post.'

'And your luggage?' said Julien, who thought that perhaps Geronimo himself might have been sent to intercept him. It was time to sup and retire to bed. Julien was still in his first sleep, when he was awakened with a start by the sound of two people talking in his room, apparently quite unconcerned.

He recognised the postmaster, armed with a dark lantern. Its light was concentrated upon the carriage-trunk, which Julien had had carried up to his room. With the postmaster was another man who was calmly going through the open trunk. Julien could make out only the sleeves of his coat, which were black and close-fitting.

'It is a cassock,' he said to himself, and quietly seized the pocket pistols which he had placed under his pillow.

'You need not be afraid of his waking, Monsieur le Cure,' said the postmaster. 'The wine we gave them was some of what you prepared yourself.'

'I can find no trace of papers,' replied the cure. 'Plenty of linen, oils, pomades and fripperies; he is a young man of the world, occupied with his

own pleasures. The envoy will surely be the other, who pretends to speak with an Italian accent.'

The men came up to Julien to search the pockets of his travelling coat. He was strongly tempted to kill them as robbers. This could involve no dangerous consequences. He longed to do it . . . 'I should be a mere fool,' he said to himself, 'I should be endangering my mission.' After searching his coat, 'this is no diplomat,' said the priest: he moved away, and wisely.

'If he touches me in my bed, it will be the worse for him!' Julien was saying to himself; 'he may quite well come and stab me, and that I will not allow.'

The cure turned his head, Julien half-opened his eyes; what was his astonishment! It was the abbe Castanede! And indeed, although the two men had tried to lower their voices, he had felt, from the first, that he recognised the sound of one of them. He was seized with a passionate desire to rid the world of one of its vilest scoundrels . . .

'But my mission!' he reminded himself.

The priest and his acolyte left the room. A quarter of an hour later, Julien pretended to awake. He called for help and roused the whole house.

'I have been poisoned,' he cried, 'I am in horrible agony!' He wanted a pretext for going to Geronimo's rescue. He found him half asphyxiated by the laudanum that had been in his wine.

Julien, fearing some pleasantry of this kind, had supped upon chocolate which he had brought with him from Paris. He could not succeed in arousing Geronimo sufficiently to make him agree to leave the place.

'Though you offered me the whole Kingdom of Naples,' said the singer, 'I would not forgo the pleasure of sleep at this moment.'

'But the seven Sovereign Princes!'

'They can wait.'

Julien set off alone and arrived without further incident at the abode of the eminent personage. He spent a whole morning in vainly soliciting an audience. Fortunately, about four o'clock, the Duke decided to take the air. Julien saw him leave the house on foot, and had no hesitation in going up to him and begging for alms. When within a few feet of the eminent personage, he drew out the Marquis de La Mole's watch, and flourished it ostentatiously. 'Follow me at distance,' said the other, without looking at him.

After walking for a quarter of a league, the Duke turned abruptly in to a little Kaffeehaus. It was in a bedroom of this humblest form of inn that Julien had the honour of reciting his four pages to the Duke. When he had finished: 'Begin again, and go more slowly,' he was told.

The Prince took down notes. 'Go on foot to the next post. Leave your luggage and your calash here. Make your way to Strasbourg as best you can, and on the twenty-second of the month' — it was now the tenth—'be in this coffee-house here at half-past twelve. Do not leave here for half an hour. Silence!'

Such were the only words that Julien heard said. They sufficed to fill him with the deepest admiration. 'It is thus,' he thought, 'that one handles affairs; what would this great statesman say if he had heard those hotheaded chatterboxes three days ago?'

Julien took two days to reach Strasbourg, he felt that there was nothing for him to do there. He made a wide circuit. 'If that devil, the abbe Castanede has recognised me, he is not the man to be easily shaken off . . . And what a joy to him to make a fool of me, and to spoil my mission!'

The abbe Castanede, Chief of Police to the Congregation along the whole of the Northern frontier, had mercifully not recognised him. And the Jesuits of Strasbourg, albeit most zealous, never thought of keeping an eye on Julien, who, with his Cross and his blue greatcoat, had the air of a young soldier greatly concerned with his personal appearance.

Chapter 24

Strasbourg

Fascination! Thou sharest with love all its energy, all its capacity for suffering. Its enchanting pleasures, its sweet delights are alone beyond thy sphere. I could not say, as I saw her asleep: She is all mine with her angelic beauty and her sweet frailties! Behold her delivered into my power, as heaven made her in its compassion to enchant a man's heart.

Ode by SCHILLER

Obliged to spend a week in Strasbourg, Julien sought to distract himself with thoughts of martial glory and of devotion to his country. Was he in love, then? He could not say, only he found in his bruised heart Mathilde the absolute mistress of his happiness as of his imagination. He required all his natural energy to keep himself from sinking into despair. To think of anything that bore no relation to Mademoiselle de La Mole was beyond his power. Ambition, the mere triumphs of vanity, had I distracted him in the past from the sentiments that Madame de Renal inspired in him. Mathilde had absorbed all; he found her everywhere in his future.

On every hand, in this future, Julien foresaw failure. This creature whom we saw at Verrieres so filled with presumption, so arrogant, had fallen into an absurd extreme of modesty.

Three days earlier he would have killed the abbe Castanede with pleasure, and at Strasbourg, had a boy picked a quarrel with him, he would have offered the boy an apology. In thinking over the adversaries, the enemies whom he had encountered in the course of his life, he found that invariably he, Julien, had been in the wrong.

The fact was that he had now an implacable enemy in that powerful imagination, which before had been constantly employed in painting such brilliant successes for him in the future.

The absolute solitude of a traveller's existence strengthened the power of this dark imagination. What a treasure would a friend have been! 'But,' Julien asked himself, 'is there a heart in the world that beats for me? And if I had a friend, does not honour impose on me an eternal silence?'

He took a horse and rode sadly about the neighbourhood of Kehl; it is a village on the bank of the Rhine, immortalised by Desaix and Gouvion Saint–Cyr. A German peasant pointed out to him the little streams, the roads, the islands in the Rhine which the valour of those great Generals has made famous. Julien, holding the reins in his left hand, was carrying spread out in his right the superb map which illustrates the Memoirs of Marshal Saint–Cyr. A joyful exclamation made him raise his head.

It was Prince Korasoff, his London friend, who had expounded to him some months earlier the first principles of high fatuity. Faithful to this great art, Korasoff, who had arrived in Strasbourg the day before, had been an hour at Kehl, and had never in his life read a line about the siege of 1796, began to explain it all to Julien. The German peasant gazed at him in astonishment; for he knew enough French to make out the enormous blunders into which the Prince fell. Julien's thoughts were a thousand leagues away from the peasant's, he was looking with amazement at this handsome young man, and admiring his grace in the saddle.

'A happy nature!' he said to himself. 'How well his breeches fit him, how elegantly his hair is cut! Alas, if I had been like that, perhaps after loving me for three days she would not have taken a dislike to me.'

When the Prince had come to an end of his version of the siege of Kehl: 'You look like a Trappist,' he said to Julien, 'you are infringing the principle of gravity I taught you in London. A melancholy air can never be the right thing; what you want is a bored air. If you are melancholy, it must be because you want something, there is something in which you have not succeeded.

‘It is shewing your inferiority. If you are bored, on the other hand, it is the person who has tried in vain to please you who is inferior. Realise, my dear fellow, what a grave mistake you are making.’

Julien flung a crown to the peasant who stood listening to them, open-mouthed.

‘Good,’ said the Prince, ‘that is graceful, a noble disdain! Very good!’ And he put his horse into a gallop. Julien followed him, filled with a stupefied admiration.

‘Ah! If I had been like that, she would not have preferred Croisenois to me!’ The more his reason was shocked by the absurdities of the Prince, the more he despised himself for not admiring them, and deemed himself unfortunate in not sharing them. Self-contempt can be carried no farther.

The Prince found him decidedly melancholy: ‘Ah, my dear fellow,’ he said to him, as they rode into Strasbourg, ‘have you lost all your money, or can you be in love with some little actress?’

The Russians imitate French ways, but always at a distance of fifty years. They have now reached the days of Louis XV.

These jests, at the expense of love, filled Julien’s eyes with tears: ‘Why should not I consult so friendly a man?’ he asked himself suddenly.

‘Well, yes, my friend,’ he said to the Prince, ‘you find me in Strasbourg, madly in love, indeed crossed in love. A charming woman, who lives in a neighbouring town, has abandoned me after three days of passion, and the change is killing me.’

He described to the Prince, under an assumed name, the actions and character of Mathilde.

‘Do not go on,’ said Korasoff: ‘to give you confidence in your physician, I am going to cut short your confidences. This young woman’s husband possesses an enormous fortune, or, what is more likely, she herself belongs to the highest nobility of the place. She must be proud of something.’

Julien nodded his head, he had no longer the heart to speak.

‘Very good,’ said the Prince, ‘here are three medicines, all rather bitter, which you are going to take without delay:

‘First: You must every day see Madame —— what do you call her?’

‘Madame de Dubois.’

‘What a name!’ said the Prince, with a shout of laughter; ‘but forgive me, to you it is sublime. It is essential that you see Madame de Dubois every day; above all do not appear to her cold and cross; remember the great principle of your age: be the opposite to what people expect of you. Show yourself precisely as you were a week before you were honoured with her favours.’

‘Ah! I was calm then,’ cried Julien, in desperation, ‘I thought that I pitied her . . .’

‘The moth singes its wings in the flame of the candle,’ the Prince continued, ‘a metaphor as old as the world.

‘First of all: you will see her every day.

‘Secondly: you will pay court to a woman of her acquaintance, but without any appearance of passion, you understand? I do not conceal from you, yours is a difficult part to play: you have to act, and if she discovers that you are acting, you are doomed.’

‘She is so clever, and I am not! I am doomed,’ said Julien sadly.

‘No, you are only more in love than I thought. Madame de Dubois is profoundly taken up with herself, like all women who have received from heaven either too high a rank or too much money. She looks at herself instead of looking at you, and so does not know you. During the two or three amorous impulses to which she has yielded in your favour, by a great effort of imagination, she beheld in you the hero of her dreams and not yourself as you really are . . .

‘But what the devil, these are the elements, my dear Sorel, are you still a schoolboy? .. .

‘Egad! Come into this shop; look at that charming black cravat; you would say it was made by John Anderson, of Burlington Street; do me the pleasure of buying it, and of throwing right away that dreadful black rope which you have round your neck.

‘And now,’ the Prince went on as they left the shop of the first hosier in Strasbourg, ‘who are the friends of Madame de Dubois? Good God, what a name! Do not be angry, my dear Sorel, I cannot help it . . . To whom will you pay court?’

‘To a prude of prudes, the daughter of an enormously rich stocking-merchant. She has the loveliest eyes in the world, which please me vastly; she certainly occupies the first place in the district; but amid all her grandeur she blushes and loses her head entirely if anyone refers to trade and a shop. And unfortunately for her, her father was one of the best-known tradesmen in Strasbourg.’

‘So that if one mentions industry,’ said the Prince, with a laugh, ‘you may be sure that your fair one is thinking of herself and not of you. The weakness is divine and most useful, it will prevent you from ever doing anything foolish in her fair eyes. Your success is assured.’

Julien was thinking of Madame la Marechale de Fervaques, who often came to the Hotel de La Mole. She was a beautiful foreigner who had married the Marshal a year before his death. Her whole life seemed to have no other object than to make people forget that she was the daughter of an industrial, and in order to count for something in Paris she had set herself at the head of the forces of virtue.

Julien admired the Prince sincerely; what would he not have given to have his absurd affectations! The conversation between the friends was endless; Korasoff was in raptures: never had a Frenchman given him so long a hearing. ‘And so I have succeeded at last,’ the Prince said to himself with delight, ‘in making my voice heard when I give lessons to my masters!

‘It is quite understood,’ he repeated to Julien for the tenth time, ‘not a vestige of passion when you are talking to the young beauty, the Strasbourg stocking-merchant’s daughter, in the presence of Madame de Dubois. On the contrary, burning passion when you write. Reading a well-written love letter is a prude’s supreme pleasure; it is a momentary relaxation. She is not acting a part, she dares to listen to her heart; and so, two letters daily.’

‘Never, never!’ said Julien, losing courage; ‘I would let myself be brayed in a mortar sooner than compose three sentences; I am a corpse, my dear fellow, expect nothing more of me. Leave me to die by the roadside.’

‘And who said anything about composing phrases? I have in my hold-all six volumes of love letters in manuscript. There are specimens for every kind of woman, I have a set for the most rigid virtue. Didn’t Kalisky make love on Richmond Terrace, you know, a few miles out of London, to the prettiest Quakeress in the whole of England?’

Julien was less wretched when he parted from his friend at two o’clock in the morning.

Next day the Prince sent for a copyist, and two days later Julien had fifty-three love letters carefully numbered, intended to cope with the most sublime and melancholy virtue.

‘There would be fifty-four,’ said the Prince, ‘only Kalisky was shown the door; but what does it matter to you, being ill-treated by the stocking-merchant’s daughter, since you are seeking to influence only the heart of Madame de Dubois?’

Every day they went out riding: the Prince was madly taken with Julien. Not knowing what token to give him of his sudden affection, he ended by offering him the hand of one of his cousins, a wealthy heiress in Moscow; ‘and once you are married,’ he explained, ‘my influence and the Cross you are wearing will make you a Colonel in two years.’

‘But this Cross was not given me by Napoleon, quite the reverse.’

‘What does that matter,’ said the Prince, ‘didn’t he invent it? It is still the first decoration by far in Europe.’

Julien was on the point of accepting; but duty recalled him to the eminent personage; on parting from Korasoff, he promised to write. He received the reply to the secret note that he had brought, and hastened to Paris; but he had barely been by himself for two days on end, before the thought of leaving France and Mathilde seemed to him a punishment worse than death itself. ‘I shall not wed the millions that Korasoff offers me,’ he told himself, ‘but I shall follow his advice.

‘After all, the art of seduction is his business; he has thought of nothing else for more than fifteen years, for he is now thirty. One cannot say that he is lacking in intelligence; he is shrewd and cautious; enthusiasm, poetry are impossible in such a nature: he is calculating; all the more reason why he should not be mistaken.

‘There is no help for it, I am going to pay court to Madame de Fervaques.

‘She will bore me a little, perhaps, but I shall gaze into those lovely eyes which are so like the eyes that loved me best in the world.

‘She is foreign; that is a fresh character to be studied.

‘I am mad, I am going under, I must follow the advice of a friend, and pay no heed to myself.’

Chapter 25

The Office of Virtue

But if I take this pleasure with so much prudence and circumspection, it ceases to be a pleasure for me.

LOPE DE VEGA

Immediately on his return to Paris, and on leaving the study of the Marquis de La Mole, who appeared greatly disconcerted by the messages that were conveyed to him, our hero hastened to find Conte Altamira. With the distinction of being under sentence of death, this handsome foreigner combined abundant gravity and had the good fortune to be devout; these two merits and, more than all, the exalted birth of the Count were entirely to the taste of Madame de Fervaques, who saw much of him.

Julien confessed to him gravely that he was deeply in love with her.

'She represents the purest and loftiest virtue,' replied Altamira, 'only it is a trifle Jesuitical and emphatic. There are days on which I understand every word that she uses, but I do not understand the sentence as a whole. She often makes me think that I do not know French as well as people say. This acquaintance will make you talked about; it will give you a position in society. But let us go and see Bustos,' said Conte Altamira, who had an orderly mind; 'he has made love to Madame la Marechale.'

Don Diego Bustos made them explain the matter to him in detail, without saying a word, like a barrister in chambers. He had a plump, monkish face, with black moustaches, and an unparalleled gravity; in other respects, a good carbonaro.

‘I understand,’ he said at length to Julien. ‘Has the Marechale de Fervaques had lovers, or has she not? Have you, therefore, any hope of success? That is the question. It is as much as to say that, for my own part, I have failed. Now that I am no longer aggrieved, I put it to myself in this way: often she is out of temper, and, as I shall shortly prove to you, she is nothing if not vindictive.

‘I do not find in her that choleric temperament which is a mark of genius and covers every action with a sort of glaze of passion. It is, on the contrary, to her calm and phlegmatic Dutch manner that she owes her rare beauty and the freshness of her complexion.’

Julien was growing impatient with the deliberateness and imperturbable phlegm of the Spaniard; now and again, in spite of himself, he gave vent to a monosyllabic comment.

‘Will you listen to me?’ Don Diego Bustos inquired gravely.

‘Pardon the furia francese; I am all ears,’ said Julien.

‘Well, then, the Marechale de Fervaques is much given to hatred; she is pitiless in her pursuit of people she has never seen, lawyers, poor devils of literary men who have written songs like Colle, you know?

“J’ai la marotte D’aimer Marote,” etc.’

And Julien was obliged to listen to the quotation to the end. The Spaniard greatly enjoyed singing in French.

That divine song was never listened to with greater impatience. When he had finished: ‘The Marechale,’ said Don Diego Bustos, ‘has ruined the author of the song:

“Un jour l’amant au cabaret . . . “‘

Julien was in an agony lest he should wish to sing it. He contented himself with analysing it. It was, as a matter of fact, impious and hardly decent.

‘When the Marechale flew into a passion with that song,’ said Don Diego, ‘I pointed out to her that a woman of her rank ought not to read all the stupid things that are published. Whatever progress piety and gravity may make, there will always be in France a literature of the tavern. When Madame de Fervaques had the author, a poor devil on half pay, deprived of a post worth eighteen hundred francs: “Take care,” said I to her, “you have attacked this rhymester with your weapons, he may reply to you with his rhymes: he will make a song about virtue. The gilded saloons will be on your side; the people who like to laugh will repeat his epigrams.” Do you know, Sir, what answer the Marechale made me? “In the Lord’s service all Paris would see me tread the path of martyrdom; it would be a novel spectacle in France. The people would learn to respect the quality. It would be the happiest day of my life.” Never were her eyes more brilliant.’

‘And she has superb eyes,’ exclaimed Julien.

‘I see that you are in love . . . Very well, then,’ Don Diego Bustos went on gravely, ‘she has not the choleric constitution that impels one to vengeance. If she enjoys injuring people, nevertheless, it is because she is unhappy, I suspect inward suffering. May she not be a prude who has grown weary of her calling?’

The Spaniard gazed at him in silence for fully a minute.

‘That is the whole question,’ he went on gravely, ‘and it is from this that you may derive some hope. I gave it much thought during the two years in which I professed myself her most humble servant. Your whole future, you, Sir, who are in love, hangs on this great problem. Is she a prude, weary of her calling, and malicious because she is miserable?’

‘Or rather,’ said Altamira, emerging at last from his profound silence, ‘can it be what I have said to you twenty times? Simply and solely French vanity; it is the memory of her father, the famous cloth merchant, that causes the unhappiness of a character naturally morose and dry. There could be only one happiness for her, that of living in Toledo, and being tormented by a confessor, who every day would show her hell gaping for her.’

As Julien rose to leave: ‘Altamira tells me that you are one of us,’ Don Diego said to him, graver than ever. ‘One day you will help us to reconquer our freedom, and so I wish to help you in this little diversion. It is as well that you should be acquainted with the Marechale’s style; here are four letters in her hand.’

‘I shall have them copied,’ cried Julien, ‘and return them to you.’

‘And no one shall ever learn from you a single word of what we have been saying?’

‘Never, upon my honour!’ cried Julien.

‘Then may heaven help you!’ the Spaniard concluded; and he accompanied Julien and Altamira in silence to the head of the stair.

This scene cheered our hero somewhat; he almost smiled. ‘And here is the devout Altamira,’ he said to himself, ‘helping me in an adulterous enterprise.’

Throughout the whole of the grave conversation of Don Diego Bustos, Julien had been attentive to the stroke of the hours on the clock of the Hotel d’Aligre.

The dinner hour was approaching, he was to see Mathilde again! He went home, and dressed himself with great care.

‘My first blunder,’ he said to himself, as he was going downstairs; ‘I must carry out the Prince’s orders to the letter.’

He returned to his room, and put on a travelling costume of the utmost simplicity.

‘Now,’ he thought, ‘I must consider how I am to look at her.’ It was only half-past five, and dinner was at six. He decided to go down to the drawing-room, which he found deserted. The sight of the blue sofa moved him to tears; soon his cheeks began to burn. ‘I must get rid of this absurd sensibility,’ he said to himself angrily; ‘it will betray me.’ He took up a

newspaper to keep himself in countenance, and strolled three or four times from the drawing-room to the garden.

It was only in fear and trembling and safely concealed behind a big oak tree that he ventured to raise his eyes to the window of Mademoiselle de La Mole's room. It was fast shut; he nearly fell to the ground, and stood for a long time leaning against the oak; then, with a tottering step, he went to look at the gardener's ladder.

The link of the chain, forced open by him in circumstances, alas, so different, had not been mended. Carried away by a mad impulse, Julien pressed it to his lips.

After a long course of wandering between drawing-room and garden, he found himself horribly tired; this was an initial success which pleased him greatly. 'My eyes will be dull and will not betray me!' Gradually, the guests arrived in the drawing-room; the door never opened without plunging Julien in mortal dread.

They sat down to table. At length Mademoiselle de La Mole appeared, still faithful to her principle of keeping the others waiting. She blushed a deep red on seeing Julien; she had not been told of his arrival. Following Prince Korasoff's advice, Julien looked at her hands; they were trembling. Disquieted himself, beyond all expression, by this discovery, he was thankful to appear to be merely tired.

M. de La Mole sang his praises. The Marquise addressed him shortly afterwards, and expressed concern at his appearance of fatigue. Julien kept on saying to himself: 'I must not look at Mademoiselle de La Mole too much, but I ought not either to avoid her eye. I must appear to be what I really was a week before my disaster . . . ' He had occasion to be satisfied with his success, and remained in the drawing-room. Attentive for the first time to the lady of the house, he spared no effort to make the men of her circle talk, and to keep the conversation alive.

His politeness was rewarded: about eight o'clock, Madame la Marechale de Fervaques was announced. Julien left the room and presently reappeared, dressed with the most scrupulous care. Madame de La Mole was vastly

flattered by this mark of respect, and sought to give him a proof of her satisfaction by speaking of his travels to Madame de Fervaques. Julien took his seat beside the Marechale, in such a way that his eyes should not be visible to Mathilde. Thus placed, and following all the rules of the art, he made Madame de Fervaques the object of the most awed admiration. It was with an outburst on this sentiment that the first of the fifty-three letters of which Prince Korasoff had made him a present began.

The Marechale announced that she was going on to the Opera–Bouffe. Julien hastened there; he found the Chevalier de Beauvoisis, who took him to the box of the Gentlemen of the Household, immediately beside that of Madame de Fervaques. Julien gazed at her incessantly. 'I must,' he said to himself, as he returned home, 'keep a diary of the siege; otherwise I should lose count of my attacks.' He forced himself to write down two or three pages on this boring subject, and thus succeeded (marvel of marvels!) in hardly giving a thought to Mademoiselle de La Mole.

Mathilde had almost forgotten him during his absence. 'After all, he is only a common person,' she thought, 'his name will always remind me of the greatest mistake of my life. I must return in all sincerity to the recognised standards of prudence and honour; a woman has everything to lose in forgetting them.' She showed herself ready to permit at length the conclusion of the arrangement with the Marquis de Croisenois, begun so long since. He was wild with joy; he would have been greatly astonished had anyone told him that it was resignation that lay at the root of this attitude on Mathilde's part, which was making him so proud.

All Mademoiselle de La Mole's ideas changed at the sight of Julien. 'In reality, that is my husband,' she said to herself; 'if I return in sincerity to the standards of prudence, it is obviously he that I ought to marry.'

She was prepared for importunities, for an air of misery on Julien's part; she prepared her answers: for doubtless, on rising from table, he would endeavour to say a few words to her. Far from it, he remained fixed in the drawing-room, his eyes never even turned towards the garden, heaven knows with how great an effort! 'It would be better to get our explanation over at once,' Mademoiselle de La Mole told herself; she went out by herself to the garden, Julien did not appear there. Mathilde returned and strolled past the

drawing-room windows; she saw him busily engaged in describing to Madame de Fervaques the old ruined castles that crown the steep banks of the Rhine and give them so distinctive a character. He was beginning to acquit himself none too badly in the use of the sentimental and picturesque language which is called wit in certain drawing-rooms.

Prince Korasoff would indeed have been proud, had he been in Paris: the evening was passing exactly as he had foretold.

He would have approved of the mode of behaviour to which Julien adhered throughout the days that followed.

An intrigue among those constituting the Power behind the Throne was about to dispose of several Blue Ribands; Madame la Marechale de Fervaques insisted that her great-uncle should be made a Knight of the Order. The Marquis de La Mole was making a similar claim for his father-inlaw; they combined their efforts, and the Marechale came almost every day to the Hotel de La Mole. It was from her that Julien learned that the Marquis was to become a Minister: he offered the Camarilla a highly ingenious plan for destroying the Charter, without any fuss, in three years' time.

Julien might expect a Bishopric, if M. de La Mole entered the Ministry; but to his eyes all these important interests were as though hidden by a veil. His imagination perceived them now only vaguely, and so to speak in the distance. The fearful misery which was driving him mad made him see every interest in life in the state of his relations with Mademoiselle de La Mole. He calculated that after five or six years of patient effort, he might succeed in making her love him once again.

This coolest of heads had, as we see, sunk to a state of absolute unreason. Of all the qualities that had distinguished him in the past, there remained to him only a trace of firmness. Faithful to the letter to the plan of conduct dictated to him by Prince Korasoff, every evening he took his place as near as possible to the armchair occupied by Madame de Fervaques, but found it impossible to think of a word to say to her.

The effort that he was imposing on himself to appear cured in the eyes of Mathilde absorbed all his spiritual strength, he remained rooted beside the Marechale like a barely animate being; his eyes even, as in the extremity of physical suffering, had lost all their fire.

Since Madame de La Mole's attitude towards the world was never anything more than a feeble copy of the opinions of that husband who might make her a Duchess, for some days she had been lauding Julien's merits to the skies.

Chapter 26

Moral Love

There also was of course in Adeline

That calm patrician polish in the address,

Which ne’er can pass the equinoctial line

Of anything which nature would express;

Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine,

At least his manner suffers not to guess

That anything he views can greatly please.

Don Juan, XIII. 34

‘There is a trace of madness in the way the whole of this family have of looking at things,’ thought the Marechale; ‘they are infatuated with their little abbe, who can do nothing but sit and stare at one; it is true, his eyes are not bad-looking.’

Julien, for his part, found in the Marechale’s manner an almost perfect example of that patrician calm which betokens a scrupulous politeness and still more the impossibility of any keen emotion. Any sudden outburst, a want of self-control, would have shocked Madame de Fervaques almost as much as a want of dignity towards one’s inferiors. The least sign of sensibility would have been in her eyes like a sort of moral intoxication for which one ought to blush, and which was highly damaging to what a person

of exalted rank owed to herself. Her great happiness was to speak of the King's latest hunt, her favourite book the Memoires du duc de Saint–Simon, especially the genealogical part.

Julien knew the place in the drawing-room which, as the lights were arranged, suited the style of beauty of Madame de Fervaques. He would be there waiting for her, but took great care to turn his chair so that he should not be able to see Mathilde. Astonished by this persistence in hiding from her, one evening she left the blue sofa and came to work at a little table that stood by the Marquise's armchair. Julien could see her at quite a close range from beneath the brim of Madame de Fervaques's hat. Those eyes, which governed his destiny, frightened him at first, seen at such close range, then jerked him violently out of his habitual apathy; he talked, and talked very well.

He addressed himself to the Marechale, but his sole object was to influence the heart of Mathilde. He grew so animated that finally Madame de Fervaques could not understand what he said.

This was so much to the good. Had it occurred to Julien to follow it up with a few expressions of German mysticism, religious fervour and Jesuitry, the Marechale would have numbered him straightway among the superior persons called to regenerate the age.

'Since he shows such bad taste,' Mademoiselle de La Mole said to herself, 'as to talk for so long and with such fervour to Madame de Fervaques, I shall not listen to him any more.' For the rest of the evening she kept her word, albeit with difficulty.

At midnight, when she took up her mother's candlestick, to escort her to her room, Madame de La Mole stopped on the stairs to utter a perfect panegyric of Julien. This completed Mathilde's ill humour; she could not send herself to sleep. A thought came to her which soothed her: 'The things that I despise may even be great distinctions in the Marechale's eyes.'

As for Julien, he had now taken action, he was less wretched; his eyes happened to fall on the Russia-leather portfolio in which Prince Korasoff had placed the fifty-three love letters of which he had made him a present.

Julien saw a note at the foot of the first letter: ‘Send No. 1 a week after the first meeting.’

‘I am late!’ exclaimed Julien, ‘for it is ever so long now since I first met Madame de Fervaques.’ He set to work at once to copy out this first love letter; it was a homily stuffed with phrases about virtue, and of a deadly dullness; Julien was fortunate in falling asleep over the second page.

Some hours later the risen sun surprised him crouching with his head on the table. One of the most painful moments of his life was that in which, every morning, as he awoke, he discovered his distress. This morning, he finished copying his letter almost with a laugh. ‘Is it possible,’ he asked himself, ‘that there can ever have been a young man who could write such stuff?’ He counted several sentences of nine lines. At the foot of the original he caught sight of a pencilled note.

‘One delivers these letters oneself: on horseback, a black cravat, a blue greatcoat. One hands the letter to the porter with a contrite air; profound melancholy in the gaze. If one should see a lady’s maid, wipe the eyes furtively. Address a few words to the maid.’

All these instructions were faithfully carried out.

‘What I am doing is very bold,’ thought Julien, as he rode away from the Hotel de Fervaques, ‘but so much the worse for Korasoff. To dare write to so notorious a prude! I am going to be treated with the utmost contempt, and nothing will amuse me more. This is, really, the only form of comedy to which I can respond. Yes, to cover with ridicule that odious being whom I call myself will amuse me. If I obeyed my instincts I should commit some crime for the sake of distraction.’

For a month past, the happiest moment in Julien’s day had been that in which he brought his horse back to the stables. Korasoff had expressly forbidden him to look, upon any pretext whatsoever, at the mistress who had abandoned him. But the paces of that horse which she knew so well, the way in which Julien rapped with his whip at the stable door to summon a groom, sometimes drew Mathilde to stand behind her window curtain. The muslin was so fine that Julien could see through it. By looking up in a certain way

from under the brim of his hat, he caught a glimpse of Mathilde's form without seeing her eyes. 'Consequently,' he told himself, 'she cannot see mine, and this is not the same as looking at her.'

That evening, Madame de Fervaques behaved to him exactly as though she had not received the philosophical, mystical and religious dissertation which, in the morning, he had handed to her porter with such an air of melancholy. The evening before, chance had revealed to Julien the secret springs of eloquence; he arranged himself so as to be able to see Mathilde's eyes. She, meanwhile, immediately after the arrival of the Marechale, rose from the blue sofa: this was a desertion of her regular company. M. de Croisenois showed consternation at this new caprice; his evident distress relieved Julien of the keenest pangs of his own sufferings.

This unexpected turn in his affairs made him talk like an angel; and as self-esteem finds its way even into hearts that serve as temples to the most august virtue: 'Madame de La Mole is right,' the Marechale said to herself, as she stepped into her carriage, 'that young priest has distinction. My presence must, at first, have frightened him. Indeed, everything that one finds in that house is very frivolous; all the virtue I see there is the result of age, and stood in great need of the congealing hand of time. That young man must have seen the difference; he writes well; but I am much afraid that the request that I should enlighten him with my advice, which he makes in his letter, is in reality only a sentiment unaware of itself.

'And yet, how many conversions have begun in this way! What leads me to augur well of this one is the difference in his style from that of the young men whose letters I have had occasion to see. It is impossible not to recognise unction, a profound earnestness and great conviction in the prose of this young Levite; he must have the soothing virtue of Massillon.'

Chapter 27

The Best Positions in the Church

Service! talent! merit! bah! belong to a coterie.

TELEMACHUS

Thus the idea of a Bishopric was for the first time blended with that of Julien in the head of a woman who sooner or later would be distributing the best positions in the Church of France. This prospect would have made little difference to him; for the moment, his thoughts rose to nothing that was alien to his present misery: everything intensified it; for instance the sight of his bedroom had become intolerable to him. At night, when he came upstairs with his candle, each piece of furniture, every little ornament seemed to acquire the power of speech to inform him harshly of some fresh detail of his misery.

This evening, ‘I am a galley slave,’ he said to himself, as he entered it, with a vivacity long unfamiliar to him: ‘let us hope that the second letter will be as boring as the first.’

It was even more so. What he was copying seemed to him so absurd that he began to transcribe it line for line, without a thought of the meaning.

‘It is even more emphatic,’ he said to himself, ‘than the official documents of the Treaty of Muenster, which my tutor in diplomacy made me copy out in London.’

It was only then that he remembered the letters from Madame de Fervaques, the originals of which he had forgotten to restore to the grave Spaniard, Don

Diego Bustos. He searched for them; they were really almost as fantastic a rigmarole as those of the young Russian gentleman. They were completely vague. They expressed everything and nothing. ‘It is the Aeolian harp of style,’ thought Julien. ‘Amid the most lofty thoughts about annihilation, death, the infinite, etc., I can see no reality save a shocking fear of ridicule.’

The monologue which we have here abridged was repeated nightly for a fortnight. Falling asleep while transcribing a sort of commentary on the Apocalypse, going next day to deliver a letter with a melancholy air, leaving his horse in the stable yard with the hope of catching a glimpse of Mathilde’s gown, working, putting in an appearance in the evening at the Opera when Madame de Fervaques did not come to the Hotel de La Mole; such were the monotonous events of Julien’s existence. They became more interesting when Madame de Fervaques paid a visit to the Marquise; then he could steal a glance at Mathilde’s eyes beneath the side of the Marechale’s hat, and would wax eloquent. His picturesque and sentimental phrases began to assume a turn at once more striking and more elegant.

He was fully aware that what he was saying seemed absurd to Mathilde, but he sought to impress her by the elegance of his diction. ‘The falser the things I say, the more I ought to appeal to her,’ thought Julien; and then, with a shocking boldness, he began to exaggerate certain aspects of nature. He very soon perceived that, if he were not to appear vulgar in the eyes of the Marechale, he must above all avoid any simple or reasonable idea. He continued on these lines, or abridged his amplifications according as he read success or indifference in the eyes of the two great ladies to whom he must appeal.

On the whole, his life was less horrible than at the time when his days passed in inaction.

‘But,’ he said to himself one evening, ‘here I am transcribing the fifteenth of these abominable dissertations; the first fourteen have been faithfully delivered to the Marechale’s Swiss. I shall soon have the honour of filling all the pigeonholes in her desk. And yet she treats me exactly as though I were not writing! What can be the end of all this? Can my constancy bore her as much as it bores me? I am bound to say that this Russian, Korasoff’s friend,

who was in love with the fair Quakeress of Richmond, must have been a terrible fellow in his day; no one could be more deadly.'

Like everyone of inferior intelligence whom chance brings into touch with the operations of a great general, Julien understood nothing of the attack launched by the young Russian upon the heart of the fair English maid. The first forty letters were intended only to make her pardon his boldness in writing. It was necessary to make this gentle person, who perhaps was vastly bored, form the habit of receiving letters that were perhaps a trifle less insipid than her everyday life.

One morning, a letter was handed to Julien; he recognised the armorial bearings of Madame de Fervaques, and broke the seal with an eagerness which would have seemed quite impossible to him a few days earlier: it was only an invitation to dine.

He hastened to consult Prince Korasoff's instructions. Unfortunately, the young Russian had chosen to be as frivolous as Dorat, just where he ought to have been simple and intelligible; Julien could not discover the moral attitude which he was supposed to adopt at the Marechale's table.

Her drawing-room was the last word in magnificence, gilded like the Galerie de Diane in the Tuileries, with oil paintings in the panels. There were blank spaces in these paintings, Julien learned later on that the subjects had seemed hardly decent to the lady of the house, who had had the pictures corrected. 'A moral age!' he thought.

In this drawing-room he remarked three of the gentlemen who had been present at the drafting of the secret note. One of them, the Right Reverend Bishop of —— , the Marechale's uncle, had the patronage of benefices, and, it was said, could refuse nothing to his niece. 'What a vast stride I have made,' thought Julien, with a melancholy smile, 'and how cold it leaves me! Here I am dining with the famous Bishop of —— .'

The dinner was indifferent and the conversation irritating. 'It is like the table of contents of a dull book,' thought Julien. 'All the greatest subjects of human thought are proudly displayed in it. Listen to it for three minutes, and

you ask yourself which is more striking, the emphasis of the speaker or his shocking ignorance.'

The reader has doubtless forgotten that little man of letters, named Tanbeau, the nephew of the Academician and an embryo professor, who, with his vile calumnies, seemed to be employed in poisoning the drawing-room of the Hotel de La Mole.

It was from this little man that Julien first gleaned the idea that it might well be that Madame de Fervaques, while refraining from answering his letters, looked with indulgence upon the sentiment that dictated them. The black heart of M. Tanbeau was torn asunder by the thought of Julien's successes; but inasmuch as, looking at it from another angle, a deserving man cannot, any more than a fool, be in two places at once, 'if Sorel becomes the lover of the sublime Marechale,' the future professor told himself, 'she will place him in the Church in some advantageous manner, and I shall be rid of him at the Hotel de La Mole.'

M. l'abbe Pirard also addressed long sermons to Julien on his successes at the Hotel de Fervaques. There was a sectarian jealousy between the austere Jansenist and the Jesuitical, regenerative and monarchical drawing-room of the virtuous Marechale.

Chapter 28

Manon Lescaut

Now once he was fully convinced of the foolishness and idiocy of the prior, he succeeded quite straightforwardly by calling black white, and white black.

LICHTENBERG

The Russian instructions laid down categorically that one must never contradict in speech the person with whom one corresponded. One must never depart, upon any account, from an attitude of the most ecstatic admiration; the letters were all based upon this supposition.

One evening, at the Opera, in Madame de Fervaques's box, Julien praised to the skies the ballet in Manon Lescaut.† His sole reason for doing so was that he found it insipid.

† Trans. footnote: Composed by Halevy upon a libretto by Scribe, and performed in 1830.]

The Marechale said that this ballet was greatly inferior to abbe Prevost's novel.

'What!' thought Julien, with surprise and amusement, 'a person of such extreme virtue praise a novel!' Madame de Fervaques used to profess, two or three times weekly, the most utter scorn for the writers, who, by means of those vulgar works, sought to corrupt a younger generation only too prone to the errors of the senses.

‘In that immoral and pernicious class, Manon Lescaut,’ the Marechale went on, ‘occupies, they say, one of the first places. The frailties and well-merited sufferings of a thoroughly criminal heart are, they say, described in it with a truth that is almost profound; which did not prevent your Bonaparte from declaring on Saint Helena that it was a novel written for servants.’

This speech restored all its activity to Julien’s spirit. ‘People have been trying to damage me with the Marechale; they have told her of my enthusiasm for Napoleon. This intelligence has stung her sufficiently for her to yield to the temptation to let me feel her resentment.’ This discovery kept him amused for the rest of the evening and made him amusing. As he was bidding the Marechale good night in the vestibule of the Opera: ‘Bear in mind, Sir,’ she said to him, ‘that people must not love Napoleon when they love me; they may, at the most, accept him as a necessity imposed by Providence. Anyhow, the man had not a soul pliant enough to feel great works of art.’

‘When they love me!’ Julien repeated to himself; ‘either that means nothing at all, or it means everything. There is one of the secrets of language that are hidden from us poor provincials.’ And he thought incessantly of Madame de Renal as he copied an immensely long letter intended for the Marechale.

‘How is it,’ she asked him the following evening, with an air of indifference which seemed to him unconvincing, ‘that you speak to me of London and Richmond in a letter which you wrote last night, it appears, after leaving the Opera?’

Julien was greatly embarrassed; he had copied the letter line for line, without thinking of what he was writing, and apparently had forgotten to substitute for the words London and Richmond, which occurred in the original, Paris and Saint–Cloud. He began two or three excuses, but found it impossible to finish any of them; he felt himself on the point of giving way to an outburst of helpless laughter. At length, in his search for the right words, he arrived at the following idea: ‘Exalted by the discussion of the most sublime, the highest interests of the human soul, my own, in writing to you, must have become distracted.

‘I am creating an impression,’ he said to himself, ‘therefore I can spare myself the tedium of the rest of the evening.’ He left the Hotel de Fervaques in hot haste. That evening, as he looked over the original text of the letter which he had copied the night before, he very soon came to the fatal passage where the young Russian spoke of London and Richmond. Julien was quite surprised to find this letter almost tender.

It was the contrast between the apparent frivolity of his talk and the sublime and almost apocalyptic profundity of his letters that had marked him out. The length of his sentences was especially pleasing to the Marechale; this was not the cursory style brought into fashion by Voltaire, that most immoral of men! Although our hero did everything in the world to banish any suggestion of common sense from his conversation, it had still an anti-monarchical and impious colour which did not escape the notice of Madame de Fervaques. Surrounded by persons who were eminently moral, but who often had not one idea in an evening, this lady was profoundly impressed by everything that bore a semblance of novelty; but, at the same time, she felt that she owed it to herself to be shocked by it. She called this defect, ‘retaining the imprint of the frivolity of the age’.

But such drawing-rooms are worth visiting only when one has a favour to ask. All the boredom of this life without interests which Julien was leading is doubtless shared by the reader. These are the barren moorlands on our journey.

Throughout the time usurped in Julien’s life by the Fervaques episode, Mademoiselle de La Mole had to make a constant effort not to think of him. Her heart was exposed to violent combats: sometimes she flattered herself that she was despising this gloomy young man; but, in spite of her efforts, his conversation captivated her. What astonished her most of all was his complete insincerity; he never uttered a word to the Marechale which was not a lie, or at least a shocking travesty of his point of view, which Mathilde knew so perfectly upon almost every subject. This Machiavellism impressed her. ‘What profundity!’ she said to herself; ‘how different from the emphatic blockheads or the common rascals, like M. Tanbeau, who speak the same language!’

Nevertheless, Julien passed some fearful days. It was to perform the most arduous of his duties that he appeared each evening in the Marechale's drawing-room. His efforts to play a part ended by sapping all his spiritual strength. Often, at night, as he crossed the vast courtyard of the Hotel de Fervaques, it was only by force of character and reason that he succeeded in keeping himself from sinking into despair.

'I conquered despair at the Seminary,' he said to himself: 'and yet what an appalling prospect I had before me then! I stood to make my fortune or to fail; in either case, I saw myself obliged to spend my whole life in the intimate society of all that is most contemptible and disgusting under heaven. The following spring, when only eleven short months had passed, I was perhaps the happiest of all the young men of my age.'

But often enough all these fine arguments proved futile when faced with the frightful reality. Every day he saw Mathilde at luncheon and at dinner. From the frequent letters which M. de La Mole dictated to him, he knew her to be on the eve of marrying M. de Croisenois. Already that amiable young man was calling twice daily at the Hotel de La Mole: the jealous eye of an abandoned lover did not miss a single one of his actions.

When he thought he had noticed that Mademoiselle de La Mole was treating her suitor kindly, on returning to his room, Julien could not help casting a loving glance at his pistols.

'Ah, how much wiser I should be,' he said to himself, 'to remove the marks from my linen, and retire to some lonely forest, twenty leagues from Paris, there to end this accursed existence! A stranger to the countryside, my death would remain unknown for a fortnight, and who would think of me after a fortnight had passed?'

This reasoning was extremely sound. But next day, a glimpse of Mathilde's arm, seen between her sleeve and her glove, was enough to plunge our young philosopher in cruel memories, which, at the same time, made him cling to life. 'Very well!' he would then say to himself, 'I shall follow out this Russian policy to the end. How is it going to end?

‘As for the Marechale, certainly, after I have copied these fifty-three letters, I shall write no more.

‘As for Mathilde, these six weeks of such painful play-acting, will either fail altogether to appease her anger, or will win me a moment of reconciliation. Great God! I should die of joy!’ And he was unable to pursue the idea farther.

When, after a long spell of meditation, he succeeded in recovering the use of his reason: ‘Then,’ he said to himself, ‘I should obtain a day’s happiness, after which would begin again her severities, founded, alas, upon the scant power that I have to please her, and I should be left without any further resource, I should be ruined, lost for ever . . .

‘What guarantee can she give me, with her character? Alas, my scant merit is responsible for everything. I must be wanting in elegance in my manners, my way of speaking must be heavy and monotonous. Great God! Why am I myself?’

Chapter 29

Boredom

Sacrificing oneself to one's passions is one thing; but to passions that one doesn't have! O sad nineteenth century!

GIRODET

After having read without pleasure at first Julien's long letters, Madame de Fervaques began to take an interest in them; but one thing distressed her: 'What a pity that M. Sorel is not really a priest! One could admit him to a sort of intimacy: with that Cross and what is almost a layman's coat, one is exposed to cruel questions, and how is one to answer them?' She did not complete her thought: 'some malicious friend may suppose and indeed spread the report that he is some humble little cousin, one of my father's family, some tradesman decorated by the National Guard.'

Until the moment of her first meeting Julien, Madame de Fervaques's greatest pleasure had been to write the word Marechale before her own name. Thenceforward the vanity of an upstart, morbid and easily offended, had to fight a nascent interest.

'It would be so easy for me,' the Marechale said to herself, 'to make a Vicar–General of him in some diocese not far from Paris! But M. Sorel by itself, and to add to that a mere secretary of M. de La Mole! It is deplorable.'

For the first time, this spirit which dreaded everything was stirred by an interest apart from its own pretensions to rank and to social superiority. Her old porter noticed that, when he brought her a letter from that handsome young man, who wore such a melancholy air, he was certain to see vanish

the distracted and irritated expression which the Marechale always took care to assume when any of her servants entered the room.

The boredom of a mode of life whose sole ambition was to create an effect on the public, without there being at the bottom of her heart any real enjoyment of this kind of success, had become so intolerable since she had begun to think of Julien, that, if her maids were not to be ill-treated throughout the whole of a day, it was enough that during the previous evening she should have spent an hour with this strange young man. His growing credit survived anonymous letters, very well composed. In vain did little Tanbeau supply MM. de Luz, de Croisenois, de Caylus, with two or three most adroit calumnies which those gentlemen took pleasure in spreading abroad, without stopping to consider the truth of the accusations. The Marechale, whose mind was not framed to withstand these vulgar methods, reported her doubts to Mathilde, and was always comforted.

One day, after having inquired three times whether there were any letters, Madame de Fervaques suddenly decided to write to Julien. This was a victory gained by boredom. At the second letter, the Marechale was almost brought to a standstill by the unpleasantness of writing with her own hand so vulgar an address as: ‘a M. Sorel, chez M. le Marquis de La Mole’.

‘You must,’ she said to Julien that evening in the driest of tones, ‘bring me some envelopes with your address written on them.’

‘So now I am to combine the lover and the flunkey,’ thought Julien, and bowed, amusing himself by screwing up his face like Arsene, the Marquis’s old footman.

That same evening he brought a supply of envelopes, and next day, early in the morning, he received a third letter: he read five or six lines at the beginning, and two or three towards the end. It covered four pages in a small and very close script.

Gradually she formed the pleasant habit of writing almost every day. Julien replied with faithful copies of the Russian letters, and, such is the advantage of the emphatic style, Madame de Fervaques was not at all surprised by the want of connection between the replies and her own letters.

What would have been the irritation to her pride if little Tanbeau, who had appointed himself a voluntary spy upon Julien's actions, had been able to tell her that all these letters, with their seals unbroken, were flung pell-mell into Julien's drawer!

One morning, the porter brought to him in the library a letter from the Marechale; Mathilde met the man, saw the letter, and read the address in Julien's hand. She entered the library as the porter left it; the letter was still lying on the edge of the table; Julien, busily engaged in writing, had not placed it in his drawer.

'This is what I cannot endure,' cried Mathilde, seizing the letter; 'you are forgetting me entirely, me who am your wife. Your conduct is appalling, Sir.'

With these words, her pride, astonished by the fearful impropriety of her action, stifled her; she burst into tears, and a moment later appeared to Julien to be unable to breathe.

Surprised, confounded, Julien did not clearly distinguish all the admirable and happy consequences which this scene foreboded for himself. He helped Mathilde to a seat; she almost abandoned herself in his arms.

The first instant in which he perceived this relaxation was one of extreme joy. His second thought was of Korasoff: 'I may ruin everything by a single word.'

His arms ached, so painful was the effort imposed on him by policy. 'I ought not even to allow myself to press to my heart this supple and charming form, or she will despise and abuse me. What a frightful nature!'

And as he cursed Mathilde's nature, he loved her for it a hundred times more; he felt as though he were holding a queen in his arms.

Julien's unfeeling coldness intensified the misery of wounded pride which was tearing the heart of Mademoiselle de La Mole. She was far from possessing the necessary coolness to seek to read in his eyes what he was feeling for her at that moment. She could not bring herself to look at him; she trembled lest she should meet an expression of scorn.

Seated on the divan in the library, motionless and with her head turned away from Julien, she was a prey to the keenest suffering that pride and love can make a human heart feel. Into what a frightful course of action had she fallen!

‘It was reserved for me, wretch that I am, to see the most indelicate advances repulsed! And repulsed by whom?’ added a pride mad with suffering, ‘by one of my father’s servants.

‘That is what I will not endure,’ she said aloud.

And, rising with fury, she opened the drawer of Julien’s table, which stood a few feet away from her. She remained frozen with horror on seeing there nine or ten letters unopened, similar in every respect to the letter which the porter had just brought in. On all the envelopes, she recognised Julien’s hand, more or less disguised.

‘And so,’ she cried, beside herself with rage, ‘not only have you found favour with her, but you despise her. You, a man of nought, to despise Madame la Marechale de Fervaques!

‘Ah, forgive me, my dear,’ she went on, flinging herself at his feet, ‘despise me if you wish, but love me, I can no longer live deprived of your love.’ And she fell to the ground in a dead faint.

‘So there she is, that proud creature, at my feet!’ thought Julien.

Chapter 30

A Box at the Bouffes

As the blackest sky Foretells the heaviest tempest.

Don Juan, I. 73

In the thick of all this great commotion, Julien was more bewildered than happy. Mathilde's abuse of him showed him how wise the Russian policy had been. 'Say little, do little, that is my one way of salvation.'

He lifted up Mathilde and without a word laid her down again on the divan. Gradually she gave way to tears.

To keep herself in countenance, she took Madame de Fervaques's letters in her hands; she broke the seals slowly. She gave a nervous start on recognising the Marechale's handwriting. She turned over the sheets of these letters without reading them; the majority of them covered six pages.

'Answer me this, at least,' said Mathilde at length in the most supplicating tone, but without venturing to look at Julien. 'You know very well that I am proud; it is the misfortune of my position, and indeed of my nature, I must admit; so Madame de Fervaques has stolen your heart from me . . . Has she offered you all the sacrifices to which that fatal passion led me?'

A grim silence was Julien's only answer. 'By what right,' he thought, 'does she ask of me an indiscretion unworthy of an honourable man?'

Mathilde endeavoured to read the letters; the tears that filled her eyes made it impossible for her to do so.

For a month past she had been miserable, but that proud spirit was far from confessing its feelings to itself. Chance alone had brought about this explosion. For an instant jealousy and love had overcome pride. She was seated upon the divan and in close proximity to him. He saw her hair and her throat of alabaster; for a moment he forgot all that he owed to himself; he slipped his arm round her waist, and almost hugged her to his bosom.

She turned her head towards him slowly: he was astonished at the intense grief that was visible in her eyes, and made them quite unrecognisable as hers.

Julien felt his strength begin to fail him, so colossal was the effort involved in the act of courage which he was imposing on himself.

‘Those eyes will soon express nothing but the coldest disdain,’ he said to himself, ‘if I allow myself to be carried away by the joy of loving her.’ Meanwhile, in a faint voice and in words which she had barely the strength to utter, she was repeating to him at that moment her assurance of all her regret for the action which an excessive pride might have counselled her to take.

‘I too, have my pride,’ Julien said to her in a voice that was barely articulate, and his features indicated the extreme limit of physical exhaustion.

Mathilde turned sharply towards him. The sound of his voice was a pleasure the hope of which she had almost abandoned. At that moment she recalled her pride only to curse it, she would fain have discovered some unusual, incredible act to prove to him how greatly she adored him and detested herself.

‘It is probably because of that pride,’ Julien went on, ‘that you have singled me out for an instant; it is certainly because of that courageous firmness, becoming in a man, that you respect me at this moment. I may be in love with the Marechale . . .’

Mathilde shuddered; her eyes assumed a strange expression. She was about to hear her sentence uttered. This movement did not pass unobserved by Julien; he felt his courage weaken.

‘Ah!’ he said to himself, listening to the sound of the vain words that came from his lips, as he might have listened to a noise from without; ‘if I could only cover those pale cheeks with kisses, and you not feel them!

‘I may be in love with the Marechale,’ he continued . .. and his voice grew fainter and fainter; ‘but certainly, of her interest in myself I have no decisive proof . . .’

Mathilde gazed at him; he met her gaze, at least he hoped that his features had not betrayed him. He felt himself penetrated by love to the innermost recesses of his heart. Never had he adored her so intensely; he was scarcely less mad than Mathilde. Could she have found sufficient self-control and courage to manoeuvre, he would have fallen at her feet, forswearing all idle play-acting. He had strength enough to be able to continue to speak. ‘Ah! Korasoff,’ he exclaimed inwardly, ‘why are not you here? How I need a word of advice to direct my conduct!’ Meanwhile his voice was saying:

‘Failing any other sentiment, gratitude would suffice to attach me to the Marechale; she has shown me indulgence, she has comforted me when others scorned me . . . I may perhaps not repose an unbounded faith in certain signs which are extremely flattering, no doubt, but also, perhaps, are of very brief duration.’

‘Ah! Great God!’ cried Mathilde.

‘Very well! What guarantee will you give me?’ Julien went on in sharp, firm accents, seeming to abandon for an instant the prudent forms of diplomacy. ‘What guarantee, what god will assure me that the position which you seem disposed to restore to me at this moment will last for more than two days?’

‘The intensity of my love and of my misery if you no longer love me,’ she said, clasping his hands and turning her face towards him.

The violent movement which she thus made had slightly displaced her pelerine: Julien caught a glimpse of her charming shoulders. Her hair, slightly disordered, recalled to him an exquisite memory . . .

He was about to yield. ‘An imprudent word,’ he told himself, ‘and I begin once more that long succession of days passed in despair. Madame de Renal

used to find reasons for obeying the dictates of her heart: this young girl of high society allows her heart to be moved only when she has proved to herself with good reasons that it ought to be moved.'

He perceived this truth in a flash, and in a flash also regained his courage.

He freed his hands which Mathilde was clasping in her own, and with marked respect withdrew a little way from her. Human courage can go no farther. He then busied himself in gathering together all Madame de Fervaques's letters which were scattered over the divan, and it was with a show of extreme politeness, so cruel at that moment, that he added:

'Mademoiselle de La Mole will deign to permit me to think over all this.' He withdrew rapidly and left the library; she heard him shut all the doors in turn.

'The monster is not in the least perturbed,' she said to herself . . .

'But what am I saying, a monster! He is wise, prudent, good; it is I who have done more wrong than could be imagined.'

This point of view persisted. Mathilde was almost happy that day, for she was altogether in love; you would have said that never had that heart been stirred by pride — and such pride!

She shuddered with horror when, that evening in the drawing-room, a footman announced Madame de Fervaques; the man's voice seemed to her to have a sinister sound. She could not endure the sight of the Marechale, and quickly left the room. Julien, with little pride in his hard-won victory, had been afraid lest his own eyes should betray him, and had not dined at the Hotel de La Mole.

His love and his happiness increased rapidly as the hour of battle receded; he had already begun to find fault with himself. 'How could I resist her?' he asked himself; 'if she was going to cease to love me! A single moment may alter that proud spirit, and I must confess that I have treated her scandalously.'

In the evening, he felt that he absolutely must appear at the Bouffes in Madame de Fervaques's box. She had given him an express invitation: Mathilde would not fail to hear of his presence there or of his discourteous absence. Despite the self-evidence of this argument, he had not the strength, early in the evening, to plunge into society. If he talked, he would forfeit half his happiness.

Ten o'clock struck: he must absolutely show his face.

Fortunately he found the Marechale's box filled with women, and was relegated to a place by the door, and entirely concealed by their hats. This position saved him from making a fool of himself; the divine accents of despair of Carolina in Il matrimonio segreto made him burst into tears. Madame de Fervaques saw these tears; they were in so marked a contrast to the manly firmness of his usual appearance, that this spirit of a great lady long saturated in all the most corrosive elements of the pride of an upstart was touched by them. What little she had left of a woman's heart led her to speak. She wished to enjoy the sound of her own voice at that moment.

'Have you seen the ladies de La Mole,' she said to him, 'they are in the third tier.' Instantly Julien bent forward into the house, leaning somewhat rudely upon the ledge of the box: he saw Mathilde; her eyes were bright with tears.

'And yet it is not their day for the Opera,' thought Julien; 'what eagerness!'

Mathilde had made her mother come to the Bouffes, despite the inferior position of the box which a sycophant of their circle had made haste to offer them. She wished to see whether Julien would spend that evening with the Marechale.

Chapter 31

Making Her Afraid

So this is the fine miracle of your civilisation! You have turned love into an ordinary matter.

BARNAVE

Julien hurried to Madame de La Mole's box. His eyes met first the tearful eyes of Mathilde; she was weeping without restraint, there was no one present but people of minor importance, the friend who had lent them the box and some men of her acquaintance. Mathilde laid her hand upon Julien's; she seemed to have forgotten all fear of her mother. Almost stifled by her sobs, she said nothing to him but the single word: 'Guarantees!'

'Whatever I do, I must not speak to her,' thought Julien, greatly moved himself, and covering his eyes as best he could with his hand, ostensibly to avoid the lustre that was blazing into the boxes on the third tier. 'If I speak, she can no longer doubt the intensity of my emotion, the sound of my voice will betray me, all may be lost once more.'

His struggles were far more painful than in the morning, his spirit had had time to grow disturbed. He was afraid of seeing Mathilde's vanity wounded. Frantic with love and passion, he pledged himself not to speak to her.

This is, to my mind, one of the finest traits of his character; a person capable of such an effort to control himself may go far, si fata sinant.

Mademoiselle de La Mole insisted upon taking Julien home. Fortunately it was raining in torrents. But the Marquise made him sit facing herself, talked

to him continuously, and prevented his saying a word to her daughter. One would have thought that the Marquise was concerned for Julien's happiness; no longer afraid of destroying everything by the intensity of his emotion, he abandoned himself to it with frenzy.

Dare I say that on entering his own room Julien threw himself on his knees and covered with kisses the love letters given him by Prince Korasoff?

'Oh, you great man! What do I not owe to you?' he cried in his frenzy.

Gradually a little coolness returned to him. He compared himself to a general who had just won the first half of a great battle. 'The advantage is certain, immense,' he said to himself; 'but what is going to happen tomorrow? An instant may ruin everything.'

He opened with a passionate impulse the Memoirs dictated at Saint Helena by Napoleon, and for two solid hours forced himself to read them; his eyes alone read the words, no matter, he forced himself to the task. During this strange occupation, his head and heart, rising to the level of everything that is most great, were at work without his knowledge. 'This is a very different heart from Madame de Renal's,' he said to himself, but he went no farther.

'Make her afraid,' he cried of a sudden, flinging the book from him. 'The enemy will obey me only so long as I make him fear me, then he will not dare to despise me.'

He paced up and down his little room, wild with joy. To be frank, this happiness was due to pride rather than love.

'Make her afraid!' he repeated proudly to himself, and he had reason to be proud. 'Even in her happiest moments, Madame de Renal always doubted whether my love were equal to hers. Here, it is a demon that I am conquering, I must therefore conquer.'

He knew well that next morning, by eight o'clock, Mathilde would be in the library; he did not appear there until nine, burning with love, but his head controlled his heart. Not a single minute passed, perhaps, without his repeating to himself: 'Always keep her mind occupied with the great uncertainty: "Does he love me?" Her privileged position, the flattery she

receives from all who speak to her make her a little too much inclined to self-assurance.'

He found her pale, calm, seated upon the divan, but incapable, apparently, of making any movement. She offered him her hand.

'Dear, I have offended you, it is true; you are perhaps vexed with me?'

Julien was not expecting so simple a tone. He was on the point of betraying himself.

'You wish for guarantees, dear,' she went on after a silence which she had hoped to see broken; 'that is only fair. Carry me off, let us start for London. I shall be ruined for ever, disgraced . . . ' She found the courage to withdraw her hand from Julien so as to hide her eyes with it. All the sentiments of modesty and feminine virtue had returned to her heart . . . 'Very well! Disgrace me,' she said at length with a sigh, 'it is a guarantee.'

'Yesterday I was happy, because I had the courage to be severe with myself,' thought Julien. After a brief interval of silence, he gained sufficient mastery over his heart to say in an icy tone:

'Once we are on the road to London, once you are disgraced, to use your own words, who can promise me that you will love me? That my company in the post-chaise will not seem to you an annoyance? I am not a monster, to have ruined your reputation will be to me only an additional grief. It is not your position in society that is the obstacle, it is unfortunately your own nature. Can you promise yourself that you will love me for a week?

'(Ah! Let her love me for a week, for a week only,' Julien murmured to himself, 'and I shall die of joy. What do I care for the future, what do I care for life itself? And this divine happiness may begin at this moment if I choose, it depends entirely upon myself!)'

Mathilde saw him turn pensive.

'So I am altogether unworthy of you,' she said, clasping his hand.

Julien embraced her, but at once the iron hand of duty gripped his heart. ‘If she sees how I adore her, then I lose her.’ And, before withdrawing himself from her arms, he had resumed all the dignity that befits a man.

On that day and the days that followed, he managed to conceal the intensity of his bliss; there were moments in which he denied himself even the pleasure of clasping her in his arms.

At other moments, the frenzy of happiness swept aside all the counsels of prudence.

It was beside a bower of honeysuckle arranged so as to hide the ladder, in the garden, that he was accustomed to take his stand in order to gaze at the distant shutters of Mathilde’s window and lament her inconstancy. An oak of great size stood close by, and the trunk of this tree prevented him from being seen by indiscreet persons.

As he passed with Mathilde by this spot which recalled to him so vividly the intensity of his grief, the contrast between past despair and present bliss was too strong for him; tears flooded his eyes, and, carrying to his lips the hand of his mistress: ‘Here I lived while I thought of you; from here I gazed at that shutter, I awaited for hours on end the fortunate moment when I should see this hand open it . . .’

He gave way completely. He portrayed to her, in those true colours which one does not invent, the intensity of his despair at that time. In spasmodic utterances he spoke of his present happiness which had put an end to that cruel suffering . . .

‘What am I doing, Great God!’ said Julien, coming suddenly to his senses. ‘I am destroying everything.’

In the height of his alarm he thought he already saw less love in the eyes of Mademoiselle de La Mole. This was an illusion; but Julien’s face changed rapidly and was flooded with a deathly pallor. His eyes grew dull for a moment, and an expression of arrogance not devoid of malice succeeded that of the most sincere, the most whole-hearted love.

‘Why, what is the matter with you, dear?’ Mathilde tenderly, anxiously inquired.

‘I am lying,’ said Julien savagely, ‘and I am lying to you. I reproach myself for it, and yet God knows that I respect you sufficiently not to lie. You love me, you are devoted to me, and I have no need to make fine speeches in order to please you.’

‘Great God! They were only fine speeches, all the exquisite things you have been saying to me for the last ten minutes?’

‘And I reproach myself for them strongly, dear friend. I made them up long ago for a woman who loved me and used to bore me . . . That is the weak spot in my character, I denounce myself to you, forgive me.’

Bitter tears streamed down Mathilde’s cheeks.

‘Whenever some trifle that has shocked me sets me dreaming for a moment,’ Julien went on, ‘my execrable memory, which I could curse at this moment, offers me a way of escape, and I abuse it.’

‘So I have unconsciously done something that has displeased you?’ said Mathilde with a charming simplicity.

‘One day, I remember, as you passed by these honeysuckles, you plucked a flower, M. de Luz took it from you, and you let him keep it. I was close beside you.’

‘M. de Luz? It is impossible,’ replied Mathilde with the dignity that came so naturally to her: ‘I never behave like that.’

‘I am certain of it,’ Julien at once rejoined.

‘Ah, well! Then it must be true, dear,’ said Mathilde, lowering her eyes sadly. She was positive that for many months past she had never allowed M. de Luz to take any such liberty.

Julien gazed at her with an inexpressible tenderness:

‘No,’ he said to himself, ‘she does not love me any the less.’

She rebuked him that evening, with a laugh, for his fondness for Madame de Fervaques: a bourgeois in love with a parvenue. ‘Hearts of that class are perhaps the only ones that my Julien cannot inflame. She has turned you into a regular dandy,’ she said, playing with his hair.

During the period in which he supposed himself to be scorned by Mathilde, Julien had become one of the best-dressed men in Paris. But he had an additional advantage over the other men of this sort; once his toilet was performed, he never gave it another thought.

One thing still vexed Mathilde. Julien continued to copy out the Russian letters, and to send them to the Marechale.

Chapter 32

The Tiger

Alas! why these things and not others!

BEAUMARCHAIS

An English traveller relates how he lived upon intimate terms with a tiger; he had reared it and used to play with it, but always kept a loaded pistol on the table.

Julien abandoned himself to the full force of his happiness only at those moments when Mathilde could not read the expression of it in his eyes. He was punctilious in his performance of the duty of addressing a few harsh words to her from time to time.

When Mathilde's meekness, which he observed with astonishment, and the intensity of her devotion came near to destroying all his self-control, he had the courage to leave her abruptly.

For the first time Mathilde was in love.

Life, which had always crawled for her at a snail's pace, now flew.

As it was essential, nevertheless, that her pride should find some outlet, she sought to expose herself with temerity to all the risks that her love could make her run. It was Julien who showed prudence; and it was only when there was any question of danger that she did not comply with his wishes; but, submissive, and almost humble towards him, she showed all the more

arrogance towards anyone else who came near her in the house, relatives and servants alike.

In the evenings in the drawing-room, she would summon Julien, and would hold long conversations with him in private.

Little Tanbeau took his place one evening beside them; she asked him to go to the library and fetch her the volume of Smollett which dealt with the Revolution of 1688; and as he seemed to hesitate: There is no need to hurry,' she went on with an expression of insulting arrogance, which was balm to Julien's spirit.

'Did you notice the look in that little monster's eyes?' he asked her.

'His uncle has done ten or twelve years of service in this drawing-room, otherwise I should have him shown the door this instant.'

Her behaviour towards MM. de Croisenois, de Luz, and the rest, perfectly polite in form, was scarcely less provoking in substance. Mathilde blamed herself severely for all the confidences she had made to Julien in the past, especially as she did not dare confess to him that she had exaggerated the almost wholly innocent marks of interest of which those gentlemen had been the object.

In spite of the most admirable resolutions, her womanly pride prevented her every day from saying to Julien: 'It was because I was speaking to you that I found pleasure in the thought of my weakness in not withdrawing my hand when M. de Croisenois laid his hand on a marble table beside mine, and managed to touch it.'

Nowadays, whenever one of these gentlemen had spoken to her for a few moments, she found that she had a question to ask Julien, and this was a pretext for keeping him by her side.

She found that she was pregnant, and told the news joyfully to Julien.

'Now will you doubt me? Is not this a guarantee? I am your wife for ever.'

This announcement filled Julien with profound astonishment. He was on the point of forgetting his principle of conduct. ‘How can I be deliberately cold and offensive to this poor girl who is ruining herself for me?’ Did she appear at all unwell, even on the days on which wisdom made her dread accents heard, he no longer found the courage to address to her one of those cruel speeches, so indispensable, in his experience, to the continuance of their love.

‘I mean to write to my father,’ Mathilde said to him one day; ‘he is more than a father to me; he is a friend; and so I should feel it unworthy of you and of myself to seek to deceive him, were it only for a moment.’

‘Great God! What are you going to do?’ said Julien in alarm.

‘My duty,’ she replied, her eyes sparkling with joy.

She felt herself to be more magnanimous than her lover.

‘But he will turn me from the house in disgrace!’

‘He is within his rights, we must respect them. I shall give you my arm, and we shall go out by the front door, in the full light of day.’

Julien in astonishment begged her to wait for a week.

‘I cannot,’ she replied, ‘the voice of honour speaks. I have seen what is my duty, I must obey, and at once.’

‘Very well! I order you to wait,’ said Julien at length. ‘Your honour is covered, I am your husband. This drastic step is going to alter both our positions. I also am within my rights. Today is Tuesday; next Tuesday is the day of the Duc de Retz’s party; that evening, when M. de La Mole comes home, the porter shall hand him the fatal letter . . . He thinks only of making you a Duchess, of that I am certain; think of his grief!’

‘Do you mean by that: think of his revenge?’

‘I may feel pity for my benefactor, distress at the thought of injuring him; but I do not and never shall fear any man.’

Mathilde submitted. Since she had told Julien of her condition, this was the first time that he had spoken to her with authority; never had he loved her so dearly. It was with gladness that the softer side of his heart seized the pretext of Mathilde's condition to forgo the duty of saying a few cruel words. The idea of a confession to M. de La Mole disturbed him greatly. Was he going to be parted from Mathilde? And, however keen the distress with which she saw him go, a month after his departure would she give him a thought?

He felt almost as great a horror of the reproaches which the Marquis might justly heap upon him.

That evening, he admitted to Mathilde this second cause of his distress, and then, carried away by love, admitted the other also.

She changed colour.

'Indeed,' she said, 'six months spent out of my company would be a grief to you!'

'Immense, the only one in the world on which I look with terror.'

Mathilde was delighted. Julien had played his part with such thoroughness that he had succeeded in making her think that of the two she was the more in love.

The fatal Tuesday came. At midnight, on returning home, the Marquis found a letter with the form of address which indicated that he was to open it himself, and only when he was unobserved.

'MY FATHER,

'Every social tie that binds us is broken, there remain only the ties of nature. After my husband, you are and will ever be the dearest person in the world to me. My eyes fill with tears, I think of the distress that I am causing you, but, that my shame may not be made public, to give you time to deliberate and act, I have been unable to postpone any further the confession that I owe you. If your affection for me, which I know to be extreme, chooses to allow me a small pension, I shall go and settle myself where you please, in Switzerland, for instance, with my husband. His name is so obscure that no

one will recognise your daughter in Madame Sorel, daughter-inlaw of a carpenter of Verrieres. There you have the name I have found it so hard to write. I dread, for Julien, your anger, apparently so righteous. I shall not be a Duchess, Father; but I knew it when I fell in love with him; for it was I that fell in love first, it was I who seduced him. I inherit from you a spirit too exalted to let my attention be arrested by what is or seems to me vulgar. It is in vain that with the idea of pleasing you I have thought of M. de Croisenois. Why did you place real merit before my eyes? You told me yourself on my return from Hyeres: "This young Sorel is the only person who amuses me"; the poor boy is as greatly distressed as myself, if it be possible, by the pain which this letter must cause you. I cannot prevent your being angry with me as a father; but care for me still as a friend.

'Julien respected me. If he spoke to me now and again, it was solely because of his profound gratitude to you: for the natural pride of his character leads him never to reply save officially to anyone who is placed so far above him. He has a strong and inborn sense of the differences of social position. It was I, I admit, with a blush, to my best friend, and never shall such an admission be made to any other, it was I who one day in the garden pressed his arm.

'In twenty-four hours from now, why should you be angry with him? My fault is irreparable. If you require it, I shall be the channel to convey to you the assurances of his profound respect and of his distress at displeasing you. You will not set eyes on him; but I shall go and join him wherever he may choose. It is his right, it is my duty, he is the father of my child. If in your generosity you are pleased to allow us six thousand francs upon which to live, I shall accept them with gratitude: otherwise, Julien intends to settle at Besancon where he will take up the profession of teacher of Latin and Literature. However low the degree from which he springs, I am certain that he will rise. With him, I have no fear of obscurity. If there be a Revolution, I am sure of a leading part for him. Could you say as much for any of those who have sought my hand? They have fine estates? I cannot find in that single circumstance a reason for admiration. My Julien would attain to a high position even under the present form of government, if he had a million and were protected by my father . . .'

Mathilde, who knew that the Marquis was a man entirely governed by first impressions, had written eight pages.

‘What is to be done?’ Julien said to himself while M. de La Mole was reading this letter; ‘where do, first of all, my duty, secondly, my interest lie? The debt that I owe him is immense: I should have been, but for him, a rascally understrapper, and not rascal enough to be hated and persecuted by the rest. He has made me a man of the world. My necessary rascalities will be, first of all, rarer, and secondly, less ignoble. That is more than if he had given me a million. I owe to him this Cross and the record of so-called diplomatic services which have raised me above my rank.

‘If he were to take his pen to prescribe my conduct, what would he write?’

Julien was sharply interrupted by M. de La Mole’s old valet.

‘The Marquis wishes to see you this moment, dressed or undressed.’

The valet added in an undertone as they were side by side: ‘He is furious, beware.’

Chapter 33

The Torment of the Weak

In cutting this diamond, a clumsy jeweller removed some of its brightest sparkles. In the Middle Ages, what am I saying? even under Richelieu, a Frenchman still had the power to desire.

MIRABEAU

Julien found the Marquis furious: for the first time in his life, perhaps, this gentleman was guilty of bad taste; he heaped on Julien all the insults that came to his lips. Our hero was astonished, irritated, but his sense of gratitude was not shaken. ‘How many fine projects long cherished in his secret thoughts, the poor man sees crumble in an instant. But I owe it to him to answer him, my silence would increase his rage.’ His answer was furnished for him from the part of Tartuffe.

‘I am no angel . . . I have served you well, you have rewarded me generously . . . I was grateful, but I am twenty-two years old . . . In this household, my thoughts were intelligible only to yourself, and to that obliging person . . .’

‘Monster!’ cried the Marquis. ‘Obliging! Obliging! On the day when you found her obliging, you ought to have fled.’

‘I made an attempt; I asked you if I might go to Languedoc.’

Tired of pacing the room in fury, the Marquis, broken by grief, threw himself into an armchair; Julien heard him murmur to himself: ‘This is no scoundrel.’

‘No, I am not one to you,’ cried Julien, falling at his feet. But he felt extremely ashamed of this impulse and rose quickly.

The Marquis was really out of his mind. On seeing this movement he began again to shower upon Julien atrocious insults worthy of a cab-driver. The novelty of these oaths was perhaps a distraction.

‘What? My daughter is to be called Madame Sorel! What! My daughter is not to be a Duchess!’ Whenever these two ideas presented themselves in such clear terms, the Marquis was in torment, and his impulses were uncontrolled. Julien began to fear a thrashing.

In his lucid intervals, and when the Marquis began to grow accustomed to his disgrace, his reproaches became quite reasonable.

‘You ought to have gone, Sir,’ he said. ‘It was your duty to go . . . You are the meanest of mankind . . .’

Julien went to the table and wrote:

‘For a long time my life has been insupportable, I am putting an end to it. I beg Monsieur le Marquis to accept, with my expression of a gratitude that knows no bounds, my apologies for the trouble which my death in his house may cause.’

‘Will Monsieur le Marquis deign to peruse this paper . . . Kill me,’ said Julien, ‘or have me killed by your valet. It is one o’clock in the morning, I am going to stroll in the garden towards the wall at the far end.’

‘Go to the devil,’ the Marquis shouted after him as he left the room.

‘I understand,’ thought Julien; ‘he would not be sorry to see me spare his valet the responsibility for my death . . . Let him kill me, well and good, it is a satisfaction that I am offering him . . . But, by Jove, I am in love with life . . . I owe myself to my child.’

This idea, which for the first time appeared thus clearly before his imagination, completely absorbed him after the first few minutes of his stroll had been devoted to the sense of danger.

This entirely novel interest made a prudent creature of him. ‘I need advice to guide me in dealing with that fiery man . . . He has no judgment, he is capable of anything. Fouque is too far off, besides he would not understand the sentiments of a heart like the Marquis’s.

‘Conte Altamira . . . Can I be sure of eternal silence? My request for advice must not be a definite action, nor complicate my position. Alas! There is no one left but the sombre abbe Pirard . . . His mind is narrowed by Jansenism . . . A rascally Jesuit would know the world better, and would be more to my purpose . . . M. Pirard is capable of beating me, at the mere mention of my crime.’

The genius of Tartuffe came to Julien’s aid: ‘Very well, I shall go and confess to him.’ This was the resolution to which he finally came in the garden, after pacing it for fully two hours. He no longer thought that he might be surprised by a gunshot; sleep was overpowering him.

Next morning, before daybreak, Julien was several leagues from Paris, knocking at the door of the stern Jansenist. He found, greatly to his astonishment, that the other was not unduly surprised at his confession.

‘I ought perhaps to blame myself,’ the abbe said to himself, more anxious than angry. ‘I had thought that I detected this love affair. My affection for yourself, you little wretch, restrained me from warning her father . . .’

‘What will he do?’ Julien asked him boldly.

(At that moment, he loved the abbe and a scene would have been most painful to him.)

‘I can see three courses of action,’ Julien continued: ‘First of all, M. de La Mole may have me put to death’; and he told the abbe of the letter announcing his suicide which he had left with the Marquis; ‘secondly, he may have me shot down by Comte Norbert, who will challenge me to a duel.’

‘You would accept?’ said the abbe in a fury, rising to his feet.

‘You do not allow me to finish. Certainly I should never fire at the son of my benefactor.

‘Thirdly, he may send me away. If he says to me: “Go to Edinburgh, to New York,” I shall obey. Then they can conceal Mademoiselle de La Mole’s condition; but I shall never allow them to destroy my child.’

‘That, you may be sure, will be the first idea to occur to that corrupt man . . .’

In Paris, Mathilde was in despair. She had seen her father about seven o’clock. He had shown her Julien’s letter, she trembled lest he should have deemed it noble to put an end to his life: ‘And without my permission?’ she said to herself with an agony which partook of anger.

‘If he is dead, I shall die,’ she said to her father. ‘It is you that will be the cause of my death . . . You will rejoice at it, perhaps . . . But I swear to his ghost that I shall at once put on mourning, and shall be publicly Madame veuve Sorel†, I shall send out the usual announcements, you may count on that . . . You will not find me pusillanimous nor a coward.’

† the widow of M. Sorel]

Her love rose to the pitch of madness. It was now M. de La Mole’s turn to be left speechless.

He began to look upon what had happened more reasonably. At luncheon Mathilde did not put in an appearance. The Marquis was relieved of an immense burden, and flattered as well, when he discovered that she had said nothing to her mother.

Julien dismounted from his horse. Mathilde sent for him, and flung herself into his arms almost in the sight of her maid. Julien was not unduly grateful for this transport, he had come away most diplomatic and most calculating from his long conference with the abbe Pirard. His imagination was extinguished by the calculation of possibilities. Mathilde, with tears in her eyes, informed him that she had seen the letter announcing his suicide.

‘My father may change his mind; oblige me by setting off instantly for Villequier. Mount your horse, leave the premises before they rise from table.’

As Julien did not in any way alter his air of cold astonishment, she burst into a flood of tears.

‘Allow me to manage our affairs,’ she cried to him with a transport, clasping him in her arms. ‘You know very well that it is not of my own free will that I part from you. Write under cover to my maid, let the address be in a strange hand; as for me, I shall write you volumes. Farewell! Fly.’

This last word wounded Julien, he obeyed nevertheless. ‘It is fated,’ he thought, ‘that even in their best moments, these people must find a way of hurting me.’

Mathilde put up a firm resistance to all her father’s prudent plans. She steadfastly refused to set the negotiation upon any other basis than this: She was to be Madame Sorel, and would live in poverty with her husband in Switzerland, or with her father in Paris. She thrust from her the suggestion of a clandestine confinement. ‘That would pave the way to the possibility of calumny and dishonour. Two months after our marriage, I shall travel abroad with my husband, and it will be easy for us to pretend that my child was born at a suitable date.’

Received at first with transports of rage, this firmness ended by inspiring the Marquis with doubts.

In a weak moment: ‘Here,’ he said to his daughter, ‘is a transfer of ten thousand livres a year in the Funds, send it to your Julien, and let him speedily make it impossible for me to reclaim it.’

To obey Mathilde, whose love of giving orders he knew, Julien had made an unnecessary journey of forty leagues: he was at Villequier, examining the accounts of the agents; this generosity on the part of the Marquis was the occasion of his return. He went to seek asylum with the abbe Pirard, who, during his absence, had become Mathilde’s most effective ally. As often as

he was interrogated by the Marquis, he proved to him that any other course than a public marriage would be a crime in the sight of God.

‘And happily,’ the abbe added, ‘the wisdom of the world is here in accordance with religion. Could you reckon for an instant, knowing the fiery character of Mademoiselle de La Mole, upon a secrecy which she had not imposed on herself? If you do not allow the frank course of a public marriage, society will occupy itself for far longer with this strange misalliance. Everything must be stated at one time, without the least mystery, apparent or real.’

‘It is true,’ said the Marquis, growing pensive. ‘By this method, to talk of the marriage after three days becomes the chatter of a man who lacks ideas. We ought to profit by some great anti-Jacobin measure by the Government to slip in unobserved in its wake.’

Two or three of M. de La Mole’s friends shared the abbe Pirard’s view. The great obstacle, in their eyes, was Mathilde’s decided nature. But in spite of all these specious arguments, the Marquis could not grow reconciled to abandoning the hope of a tabouret for his daughter.

His memory and his imagination were full of all sorts of trickeries and pretences which had still been possible in his younger days. To yield to necessity, to go in fear of the law seemed to him an absurd thing and dishonouring to a man of his rank. He was paying dearly for those enchanting dreams in which he had indulged for the last ten years as to the future of his beloved daughter.

‘Who could have foreseen it?’ he said to himself. ‘A girl of so haughty a character, so elevated a mind, prouder than myself of the name she bears! One whose hand had been asked of me in advance by all the most illustratious blood in France!

‘We must abandon all prudence. This age is destined to bring everything to confusion! We are marching towards chaos.’

Chapter 34

A Man of Spirit

The prefect riding along on his horse thought to himself, Why should I not be a minister, head of the Cabinet, a duke? This is how I would wage war . . . In that way I would have innovators put in chains.

Le Globe

No argument is sufficient to destroy the mastery acquired by ten years of pleasant fancies. The Marquis thought it unreasonable to be angry, but could not bring himself to forgive. ‘If this Julien could die by accident,’ he said to himself at times . . . Thus it was that his sorrowful imagination found some relief in pursuing the most absurd chimeras. They paralysed the influence of the wise counsels of the abbe Pirard. A month passed in this way without the slightest advance in the negotiations.

In this family affair, as in affairs of politics, the Marquis had brilliant flashes of insight which would leave him enthusiastic for three days on end. At such times a plan of conduct would not please him because it was backed by sound reasons; the reasons found favour in his sight only in so far as they supported his favourite plan. For three days, he would labour with all the ardour and enthusiasm of a poet, to bring matters to a certain position; on the fourth, he no longer gave it a thought.

At first Julien was disconcerted by the dilatoriness of the Marquis; but, after some weeks, he began to discern that M. de La Mole had, in dealing with this affair, no definite plan.

Madame de La Mole and the rest of the household thought that Julien had gone into the country to look after the estates; he was in hiding in the abbe Pirard's presbytery, and saw Mathilde almost every day; she, each morning, went to spend an hour with her father, but sometimes they remained for weeks on end without mentioning the matter that was occupying all their thoughts.

'I do not wish to know where that man is,' the Marquis said to her one day; 'send him this letter.' Mathilde read:

'The estates in Languedoc bring in 20,600 francs. I give 10,600 francs to my daughter, and 10,000 francs to M. Julien Sorel. I make over the estates themselves, that is to say. Tell the lawyer to draft two separate deeds of gift, and to bring me them tomorrow; after which, no further relations between us. Ah! Sir, how was I to expect such a thing as this?

'LE MARQUIS DE LA MOLE'

'I thank you very much,' said Mathilde gaily. 'We are going to settle in the Chateau d'Aiguillon, between Agen and Marmande. They say that the country there is as beautiful as Italy.'

This donation came as a great surprise to Julien. He was no longer the severe, cold man that we have known. The destiny of his child absorbed all his thoughts in anticipation. This unexpected fortune, quite considerable for so poor a man, made him ambitious. He now saw, settled on his wife or himself, an income of 30,600 francs. As for Mathilde, all her sentiments were absorbed in one of adoration of her husband, for thus it was that her pride always named Julien. Her great, her sole ambition was to have her marriage recognised. She spent her time in exaggerating the high degree of prudence that she had shown in uniting her destiny with that of a superior man. Personal merit was in fashion in her brain.

Their almost continuous separation, the multiplicity of business, the little time that they had to talk of love, now completed the good effect of the wise policy adopted by Julien in the past.

Finally Mathilde grew impatient at seeing so little of the man whom she had now come to love sincerely.

In a moment of ill humour she wrote to her father, and began her letter like Othello:

‘That I have preferred Julien to the attractions which society offered to the daughter of M. le Marquis de La Mole, my choice of him sufficiently proves. These pleasures of reputation and petty vanity are nothing to me. It will soon be six weeks that I have lived apart from my husband. That is enough to prove my respect for you. Before next Thursday, I shall leave the paternal roof. Your generosity has made us rich. No one knows my secret save the estimable abbe Pirard. I shall go to him; he will marry us, and an hour after the ceremony we shall be on our way to Languedoc, and shall never appear again in Paris save by your order. But what pierces me to the heart is that all this will furnish a savoury anecdote at my expense, and at yours. May not the epigrams of a foolish public oblige our excellent Norbert to seek a quarrel with Julien? In that event, I know him, I should have no control over him. We should find in his heart the plebeian in revolt. I implore you on my knees, O my father, come and attend our wedding, in M. Pirard’s church, next Thursday. The point of the malicious anecdote will be blunted, and the life of your only son, my husband’s life will be made safe,’ etc., etc.

This letter plunged the Marquis in a strange embarrassment. He must now at length make up his mind. AH his little habits, all his commonplace friends had lost their influence.

In these strange circumstances, the salient features of his character, stamped upon it by the events of his younger days, resumed their full sway. The troubles of the Emigration had made him a man of imagination. After he had enjoyed for two years an immense fortune and all the distinctions of the Court, 1790 had cast him into the fearful hardships of the Emigration. This hard school had changed the heart of a man of two and twenty. Actually he was encamped amid his present wealth rather than dominated by it. But this same imagination which had preserved his soul from the gangrene of gold, had left him a prey to an insane passion for seeing his daughter adorned with a fine-sounding title.

During the six weeks that had just elapsed, urged at one moment by a caprice, the Marquis had decided to enrich Julien; poverty seemed to him ignoble, dishonouring to himself, M. de La Mole, impossible in the husband of his daughter; he showered money upon him. Next day, his imagination taking another direction, it seemed to him that Julien would hear the silent voice of this generosity in the matter of money, change his name, retire to America, write to Mathilde that he was dead to her. M. de La Mole imagined this letter as written, and traced its effect on his daughter's character . . .

On the day on which he was awakened from these youthful dreams by Mathilde's real letter, after having long thought of killing Julien or of making him disappear, he was dreaming of building up for him a brilliant future. He was making him take the name of one of his properties; and why should he not secure the transmission of his peerage to him? M. le Duc de Chaulnes, his father-inlaw, had spoken to him several times, since his only son had been killed in Spain, of wishing to hand on his title to Norbert . . .

'One cannot deny that Julien shows a singular aptitude for business, audacity, perhaps even brilliance,' the Marquis said to himself . . . 'But at the back of that character, I find something alarming. It is the impression that he produces on everyone, therefore there must be something real in it' (the more difficult this reality was to grasp, the more it alarmed the imaginative spirit of the old Marquis).

'My daughter expressed it to me very cleverly the other day' (in a letter which we have suppressed): '"Julien belongs to no drawing-room, to no set." He has not contrived to find any support against me, not the slightest resource if I abandon him . . . But is that due to ignorance of the actual state of society? Two or three times I have said to him: "There is no real and profitable candidature save that of the drawing-rooms . . ."

'No, he has not the adroit and cautious spirit of a pettifogger who never loses a minute or an opportunity . . . It is not at all the character of a Louis XI. On the other hand, I see in him the most ungenerous maxims . . . I lose track of him . . . Does he repeat those maxims to himself, to serve as a dam to his passions?

‘Anyhow, one thing is clear: he cannot endure contempt, in that way I hold him.

‘He has not the religious feeling for high birth, it is true, he does not respect us by instinct . . . That is bad; but, after all, the heart of a seminarist should be impatient only of the want of pleasure and money. He is very different; he cannot endure contempt at any price.’

Forced by his daughter’s letter, M. de La Mole saw the necessity of making up his mind: ‘Well, here is the great question: has Julien’s audacity gone the length of setting him to make love to my daughter, because he knows that I love her more than anything in the world, and that I have an income of a hundred thousand crowns?

‘Mathilde protests the opposite . . . No, master Julien, that is a point upon which I wish to be under no illusion.

‘Has there been genuine, unpremeditated love? Or rather a vulgar desire to raise himself to a good position? Mathilde is perspicacious, she felt from the first that this suspicion might ruin him with me; hence that admission: it was she who thought first of loving him . . .

‘That a girl of so lofty a character should so far have forgotten herself as to make tangible advances! . . . Press his arm in the garden, one evening, how horrible! As though she had not had a hundred less indelicate ways of letting him know that she favoured him.

‘To excuse is to accuse; I distrust Mathilde .. .’ That day, the Marquis’s arguments were more conclusive than usual. Habit, however, prevailed; he resolved to gain time and to write to his daughter; for they communicated by letter between different parts of the house. M. de La Mole dared not discuss matters with Mathilde and hold out against her. He was afraid of bringing everything to an end by a sudden concession.

‘Take care not to commit any fresh act of folly; here is a commission as Lieutenant of Hussars for M. le Chevalier Julien Sorel de La Vernaye. You see what I am doing for him. Do not cross me, do not question me. He shall

start within twenty-four hours, and report himself at Strasbourg, where his regiment is quartered. Here is a draft upon my banker; I expect obedience.'

Mathilde's love and joy knew no bounds; she sought to profit by her victory and replied at once:

'M. de La Vernaye would be at your feet, speechless with gratitude, if he knew all that you are deigning to do for him. But, in the midst of this generosity, my father has forgotten me; your daughter's honour is in danger. A single indiscretion may leave an everlasting blot, which an income of twenty thousand crowns would not efface. I shall send this commission to M. de La Vernaye only if you give me your word that, in the course of the next month, my marriage shall be celebrated in public, at Villequier. Soon after that period, which I beg you not to prolong, your daughter will be unable to appear in public save with the name of Madame de La Vernaye. How I thank you, dear Papa, for having saved me from the name of Sorel,' etc., etc.

The reply was unexpected.

'Obey or I retract all. Tremble, rash girl, I do not yet know what your Julien is, and you yourself know even less than I. Let him start for Strasbourg, and put his best foot foremost. I shall make my wishes known in a fortnight's time.'

The firmness of this reply astonished Mathilde. 'I do not know Julien'; these words plunged her in a day-dream which presently ended in the most enchanting suppositions; but she believed them to be the truth. 'My Julien's mind has not donned the tawdry little uniform of the drawing-rooms, and my father disbelieves in his superiority because of the very fact which proves it . . .

'Anyhow, if I do not obey this sudden impulse, I foresee the possibility of a public scene; a scandal lowers my position in society, and may make me less attractive in Julien's eyes. After the scandal . . . ten years of poverty; and the folly of choosing a husband on account of his merit can only be saved from ridicule by the most brilliant opulence. If I live apart from my father, at his

age, he may forget me . . . Norbert will marry some attractive, clever woman: the old Louis XIV was beguiled by the Duchesse de Bourgogne . . .'

She decided to obey, but refrained from communicating her father's letter to Julien; his unaccountable nature might lead him to commit some act of folly.

That evening, when she informed Julien that he was a Lieutenant of Hussars, his joy knew no bounds. We may form an idea of it from the ambition that marked his whole life, and from the passionate love that he now felt for his child. The change of name filled him with astonishment.

'At last,' he thought, 'the tale of my adventures is finished, and the credit is all mine. I have contrived to make myself loved by this monster of pride,' he added, looking at Mathilde; 'her father cannot live without her, nor she without me.'

Chapter 35

A Storm

My God, give me mediocrity!

MIRABEAU

He was completely absorbed; he made only a half-hearted response to the keen affection that she showed for him. He remained taciturn and sombre. Never had he appeared so great, so adorable in the eyes of Mathilde. She feared some subtle refinement of his pride which would presently upset the whole position.

Almost every morning, she saw the abbe Pirard come to the Hotel. Through his agency might not Julien have penetrated to some extent into her father's intentions? Might not the Marquis himself, in a moment of caprice, have written to him? After so great a happiness, how was she to account for Julien's air of severity? She dared not question him.

Dared not! She, Mathilde! There was, from that moment, in her feeling for Julien, something vague, unaccountable, almost akin to terror. That sere heart felt all the passion that is possible in one brought up amid all that excess of civilisation which Paris admires.

Early next morning, Julien was in the abbe Pirard's presbytery. A pair of post-horses arrived in the courtyard drawing a dilapidated chaise, hired at the nearest post.

'Such an equipage is no longer in keeping,' the stern abbe told him, with a cantankerous air. 'Here are twenty thousand francs, of which M. de La Mole

makes you a present; he expects you to spend them within the year, but to try and make yourself as little ridiculous as possible.' (In so large a sum, bestowed on a young man, the priest saw only an occasion of sin.)

'The Marquis adds: "M. Julien de La Vernaye will have received this money from his father, whom there is no use in my identifying more precisely. M. de La Vernaye will doubtless think it proper to make a present to M. Sorel, carpenter at Verrieres, who looked after him in his childhood . . . " I will undertake this part of the commission,' the abbe went on; 'I have at last made M. de La Mole decide to compromise with that abbe de Frilair, who is such a Jesuit. His position is unquestionably too strong for us. The implicit recognition of your noble birth by that man who governs Besancon will be one of the implied conditions of the arrangement.'

Julien was no longer able to control his enthusiasm, he embraced the abbe, he saw himself recognised.

'Fie!' said M. Pirard, and thrust him away; 'what is the meaning of this worldly vanity? As for Sorel and his sons, I shall offer them, in my name, an annual pension of five hundred francs, which will be paid to each of them separately, so long as I am satisfied with them.'

Julien was by this time cold and stiff. He thanked the abbe, but in the vaguest terms and without binding himself to anything. 'Can it indeed be possible,' he asked himself, 'that I am the natural son of some great nobleman, banished among our mountains by the terrible Napoleon?' Every moment this idea seemed to him less improbable . . . 'My hatred for my father would be a proof . . . I should no longer be a monster!'

A few days after this monologue, the Fifteenth Regiment of Hussars, one of the smartest in the Army, was drawn up in order of battle on the parade ground of Strasbourg. M. le Chevalier de La Vernaye was mounted upon the finest horse in Alsace, which had cost him six thousand francs. He had joined as Lieutenant, without having ever been a Second Lieutenant, save on the muster-roll of a Regiment of which he had never even heard.

His impassive air, his severe and almost cruel eyes, his pallor, his unalterable coolness won him a reputation from the first day. In a short time, his perfect

and entirely measured courtesy, his skill with the pistol and sabre, which he made known without undue affectation, removed all temptation to joke audibly at his expense. After five or six days of hesitation, the general opinion of the Regiment declared itself in his favour. ‘This young man has everything,’ said the older officers who were inclined to banter, ‘except youth.’

>From Strasbourg, Julien wrote to M. Chelan, the former cure of Verrieres, who was now reaching the extreme limits of old age:

‘You will have learned with a joy, of which I have no doubt, of the events that have led my family to make me rich. Here are five hundred francs which I beg you to distribute without display, and with no mention of my name, among the needy, who are poor now as I was once, and whom you are doubtless assisting as in the past you assisted me.’

Julien was intoxicated with ambition and not with vanity; he still applied a great deal of his attention to his outward appearance. His horses, his uniforms, the liveries of his servants were kept up with a nicety which would have done credit to the punctiliousness of a great English nobleman. Though only just a Lieutenant, promoted by favour and after two days’ service, he was already calculating that, in order to be Commander in Chief at thirty, at latest, like all the great Generals, he would need at three and twenty to be something more than Lieutenant. He could think of nothing but glory and his son.

It was in the midst of the transports of the most frenzied ambition that he was interrupted by a young footman from the Hotel de La Mole, who arrived with a letter.

‘All is lost,’ Mathilde wrote to him; ‘hasten here as quickly as possible, sacrifice everything, desert if need be. As soon as you arrive, wait for me in a cab, outside the little gate of the garden, No. — Rue —— . I shall come out to speak to you; perhaps I may be able to let you into the garden. All is lost, and, I fear, beyond hope of repair; count upon me, you will find me devoted and steadfast in adversity. I love you.’

In a few minutes, Julien obtained leave from his Colonel, and left Strasbourg at a gallop; but the fearful anxiety which was devouring him did not allow him to continue this method of travel farther than Metz. He flung himself into a post-chaise; and it was with an almost incredible rapidity that he arrived at the appointed place, outside the little gate of the garden of the Hotel de La Mole. The gate was flung open, and in a moment, Mathilde, forgetting all self-respect, threw herself into his arms. Fortunately, it was but five o'clock in the morning and the street was still deserted.

'All is lost; my father, dreading my tears, went away on Thursday night. Where? No one knows. Here is his letter; read it.' And she got into the cab with Julien.

'I could forgive everything, except the plan of seducing you because you are rich. That, unhappy girl, is the appalling truth. I give you my word of honour that I will never consent to a marriage with that man. I promise him an income of ten thousand livres if he consents to live abroad, beyond the frontiers of France, or better still in America. Read the letter which I have received in reply to a request for information. The shameless scoundrel had himself invited me to write to Madame de Renal. Never will I read a line from you about the man. I have a horror of Paris and of you. I request you to cloak with the greatest secrecy what must shortly happen. Renounce honestly a vile fellow, and you will regain a father.'

'Where is Madame de Renal's letter?' said Julien coldly. 'Here it is. I did not wish to show it to you until you were prepared.'

LETTER

'What I owe to the sacred cause of religion and morals obliges me, Sir, to the painful step which I take in addressing you; a rule, which admits of no relaxation, orders me at this moment to do harm to my neighbour, but in order to avoid a greater scandal. The grief which I feel must be overborne by a sense of duty. It is only too true, Sir, the conduct of the person with regard to whom you ask me to tell the whole truth may have seemed inexplicable or indeed honourable. It may have been thought expedient to conceal or to disguise a part of the truth, prudence required this as well as religion. But that conduct, which you desire to know, has been in fact extremely

reprehensible, and more so than I can say. Poor and avaricious, it is by the aid of the most consummate hypocrisy, and by the seduction of a weak and unhappy woman, that this man has sought to make a position for himself and to become somebody. It is a part of my painful duty to add that I am obliged to believe that M. J —— has no religious principles. I am bound in conscience to think that one of his avenues to success in a household is to seek to seduce the woman who has most influence there. Cloaked by a show of disinterestedness and by phrases from novels, his great and sole object is to contrive to secure control over the master of the house and over his fortune. He leaves in his wake misery and undying regret,' etc., etc., etc.

This letter, extremely long and half obliterated by tears, was certainly in the hand of Madame de Renal; it was even written with greater care than usual.

'I cannot blame M. de La Mole,' said Julien when he had finished reading it; 'he is just and prudent. What father would give his beloved daughter to such a man! Farewell!'

Julien sprang out of the cab, and ran to his post-chaise which had drawn up at the end of the street. Mathilde, whom he seemed to have forgotten, followed him for a little way; but the sight of the tradesmen who were coming to the doors of their shops, and to whom she was known, forced her to retire in haste into the garden.

Julien had set off for Verrieres. On this rapid journey, he was unable to write to Mathilde as he had intended, his hand traced nothing more than an illegible scrawl on the paper.

He arrived at Verrieres on a Sunday morning. He entered the shop of the local gunsmith, who congratulated him effusively on his recent access to fortune. It was the talk of the town.

Julien had some difficulty in making him understand that he required a brace of pistols. The gunsmith, at his request, loaded the pistols.

The three bells sounded; this is a signal well known in French villages, which, after the various peals of the morning, announces that mass is just about to begin.

Julien entered the new church of Verrieres. All the tall windows of the building were screened by crimson curtains. He found himself standing a few yards behind Madame de Renal's bench. He had the impression that she was praying with fervour. The sight of this woman who had loved him so dearly made Julien's arm tremble so violently that he could not at first carry out his design. 'I cannot,' he said to himself; 'I am physically incapable of it.'

At that moment, the young clerk who was serving mass rang the bell for the Elevation. Madame de Renal bowed her head which for a moment was almost entirely concealed by the folds of her shawl. Her aspect was less familiar to Julien; he fired a shot at her with one pistol and missed her, he fired a second shot; she fell.

Chapter 36

Painful Details

Do not look for any weakness on my part. I have avenged myself. I have deserved death, and here I am. Pray for my soul.

SCHILLER

Julien remained motionless, seeing nothing. When he came to himself a little, he noticed the whole congregation rushing from the church; the priest had left the altar. Julien set off at a leisurely pace in the wake of some women who were screaming as they went. One woman, who was trying to escape faster than the rest, gave him a violent push; he fell. His feet were caught in a chair overturned by the crowd; as he rose, he felt himself gripped by the collar; it was a gendarme in full uniform who was arresting him. Mechanically Julien's hand went to his pocket pistols; but a second gendarme seized him by the arms.

He was led away to prison. They took him into a room, put irons on his wrists, and left him by himself; the door was shut on him and double-locked; all this was carried out quickly, and he remained unconscious of it.

'Faith, all is over,' he said aloud on coming to himself . . . 'Yes, in a fortnight the guillotine . . . or suicide between now and then.'

His reasoning went no farther; he felt a pain in his head as though it had been gripped with violence. He looked round to see if anyone was holding it. A few moments later, he fell into a deep slumber.

Madame de Renal was not mortally wounded. The first bullet had passed through her hat; as she turned round, the second shot had been fired. This bullet had struck her in the shoulder, and, what was surprising, had glanced back from the shoulder-blade, which nevertheless it shattered, against a gothic pillar, from which it broke off a huge splinter of stone.

When, after a long and painful examination, the surgeon, a grave man, said to Madame de Renal: 'I answer for your life as for my own,' she was deeply affected.

For a long time she had sincerely longed for death. The letter which she had been ordered to write by her confessor of the moment, and had written to M. de La Mole, had dealt the final blow to this creature weakened by an ever-present sorrow. This sorrow was Julien's absence; she herself called it remorse. Her director, a young cleric, virtuous and fervent, recently arrived from Dijon, was under no illusion.

'To die thus, but not by my own hand, is not a sin,' thought Madame de Renal. 'God will pardon me perhaps for rejoicing in my death.' She dared not add: 'And to die by the hand of Julien is the acme of bliss.'

As soon as she was rid of the presence of the surgeon, and of all her friends who had come crowding round her, she sent for Elisa, her maid.

'The gaoler,' she said to her, blushing deeply, 'is a cruel man. Doubtless he intends to maltreat him, thinking that by so doing he will be pleasing me . . . The thought of such a thing is unendurable. Could you not go, as though on your own behalf, and give the gaoler this packet which contains a few louis? You will tell him that religion does not permit his maltreating him . . . But on no account must he mention this gift of money.'

It was to this circumstance that Julien was indebted for the humanity of the gaoler of Verrieres; he was still that M. Noiroud, the loyal supporter of the government, whom we have seen thrown into such a panic by the arrival of M. Appert.

A magistrate appeared in the prison. 'I have taken life with premeditation,' Julien said to him; 'I bought the pistols and had them loaded by So-and-so,

the gunsmith. Article 1342. of the Penal Code is quite clear, I deserve death and await it.' The magistrate, surprised by the character of this reply, sought to multiply his questions so that the accused might contradict himself in his answers.

'But don't you see,' Julien said to him with a smile, 'that I am making myself out as guilty as you can wish? Go, Sir, you shall not lack the quarry that you are pursuing. You shall have the pleasure of passing sentence. Spare me your presence.

'I have still a tiresome duty to perform,' thought Julien, 'I must write to Mademoiselle de La Mole.

'I have avenged myself,' he told her. 'Unfortunately, my name will appear in the newspapers, and I cannot escape from this world incognito. I shall die within two months. My revenge has been terrible, like the grief of being parted from you. From this moment, I forbid myself to write and to utter your name. Never speak of me, even to my son: silence is the only way of honouring me. To the average man I shall be a common murderer . . . Allow me to tell the truth in this supreme moment: you will forget me. This great catastrophe, as to which I recommend you never to open your lips to a living soul, will suppress for some years all the romantic and unduly adventurous element that I saw in your character. You were made to live among the heroes of the Middle Ages; show in this crisis their firmness of character. Let what is bound to happen be accomplished in secret and without compromising you. You will take a false name and dispense with a confidant. If you must absolutely have the assistance of a friend, I bequeath to you the abbe Pirard.

'Do not speak to anyone else, especially to men of your own class; de Luz or Caylus.

'A year after my death, marry M. de Croisenois; I order you as your husband. Do not write to me at all, I should not answer you. Though far less of a villain than Iago, or so it seems to me, I shall say like him: From this time forth I never will speak word.

‘No one shall see me either speak or write; you will have had my last words, with my last adoration.

‘J. S.’

It was after he had sent off this letter that for the first time, Julien, having slightly recovered himself, became extremely unhappy. One by one, each of the hopes of his ambition must be wrenched from his heart by those solemn words: ‘I am to die.’ Death, in itself, was not horrible in his eyes. His whole life had been merely a long preparation for misfortune, and he had certainly never forgotten what is reckoned the greatest misfortune of all.

‘Why!’ he said to himself, ‘if in sixty days I had to fight a duel with a man who was a champion fencer, should I be so weak as to think of it incessantly and with terror in my soul?’

He spent more than an hour in seeking to discover his exact sentiments in this connection.

When he had seen clearly into his soul, and the truth appeared before his eyes as sharply defined as one of the pillars of his prison, he thought of remorse.

‘Why should I feel any? I have been outraged in a terrible manner; I have taken life, I deserve death, but that is all. I die after having paid my reckoning with humanity. I leave behind me no unfulfilled obligation, I owe nothing to anyone; there is nothing shameful in my death but the instrument of it: that by itself, it is true, will amply suffice to shame me in the eyes of the townsfolk of Verrieres; but, from an intellectual point of view, what could be more contemptible? There remains one way of acquiring distinction in their eyes: namely, by scattering gold coins among the crowd on my way to the scaffold. My memory, linked with the thought of gold, will then be resplendent to them.’

After this consideration, which at the end of a minute seemed to him conclusive: ‘I have nothing more to do on earth,’ Julien said to himself and fell into a deep slumber.

About nine o'clock in the evening, the gaoler awakened him by bringing in his supper.

'What are they saying in Verrieres?'

'Monsieur Julien, the oath that I took before the Crucifix, in the King's court, the day I was installed in my post, compels me to keep silence.'

He was silent, but remained in the room. The spectacle of this vulgar hypocrisy amused Julien. 'I must,' he thought, 'keep him waiting a long time for the five francs which he wants as the price of his conscience.'

When the gaoler saw the meal come to an end without any attempt at corruption:

'The friendship that I feel for you, Monsieur Julien,' he began, with a false, winning air, 'obliges me to speak; although they may say that it is against the interests of justice, because it may help you to arrange your defence . . . Monsieur Julien, who has a good heart, will be glad if I tell him that Madame de Renal is going on well.'

'What! She is not dead?' cried Julien, beside himself with amazement.

'What! Didn't you know?' said the gaoler with an air of stupidity which presently turned to one of joyful greed. 'It would only be right for Monsieur to give something to the surgeon who, according to law and justice, ought not to speak. But, to oblige Monsieur, I went to his house, and he told me everything . . .'

'In short, the injury is not mortal,' said Julien, losing patience, 'you answer for that with your life?'

The gaoler, a giant six feet in stature, took fright and retreated towards the door. Julien saw that he was going the wrong way to reach the truth, he sat down again and tossed a napoleon to M. Noiroud.

As the man's story began to convince Julien that Madame de Renal's injury was not mortal, he felt himself overcome by tears. 'Leave me!' he said suddenly.

The gaoler obeyed. As soon as the door was shut: ‘Great God! She is not dead!’ exclaimed Julien; and he fell on his knees, weeping hot tears.

In this supreme moment he was a believer. What matter the hypocrisies of the priests? Can they destroy anything of the truth and sublimity of the idea of God?

Only then did Julien begin to repent of the crime that he had committed. By a coincidence which saved him from despair, at that moment only had passed away the state of irritation and semi-insanity in which he had been plunged since leaving Paris for Verrieres.

His tears sprang from a generous source, he had no doubt as to the sentence that was in store for him.

‘And so she will live!’ he said to himself . . . ‘She will live to pardon me and to love me.’

Late next morning, when the gaoler awakened him:

‘You must have a wonderful heart, Monsieur Julien,’ the man said to him. ‘Twice I have come in and did not want to wake you. Here are two bottles of excellent wine which M. Maslon, our cure, sends you.’

‘What? Is that rascal here still?’ said Julien.

‘Yes, Sir,’ replied the gaoler, lowering his voice, ‘but do not speak so loud, it may damage you.’

Julien laughed heartily.

‘At the stage I have reached, my friend, you alone could damage me, if you ceased to be gentle and human . . . You shall be well paid,’ Julien broke off, resuming his imperious air. This air was immediately justified by the gift of a small coin.

M. Noiroud told him once more, going into the fullest detail, all that he had heard about Madame de Renal, but he did not mention Miss Elisa’s visit.

This man was as menial and submissive as possible. An idea came into Julien's head: 'This sort of ungainly giant may earn three or four hundred francs, for his prison is never crowded; I can guarantee him ten thousand francs, if he cares to escape to Switzerland with me . . . The difficulty will be to persuade him of my sincerity.' The thought of the long colloquy that he would have to hold with so vile a creature filled Julien with disgust, he turned his mind to other things.

That evening, there was no longer time. A post-chaise came to fetch him at midnight. He was charmed with the gendarmes, his travelling companions. In the morning, when he arrived at the prison of Besancon, they were so kind as to lodge him on the upper floor of a gothic dungeon. He guessed the architecture to date from the beginning of the fourteenth century; he admired its grace and pointed airiness. Through a narrow gap between two walls on the farther side of a deep courtyard, there was a glimpse of a superb view.

Next day he was examined, after which, for several days, he was left to himself. His spirit was calm. He could find nothing that was not quite simple in his case: 'I sought to kill, I must be killed.'

His thoughts did not linger to consider this argument. The trial, the annoyance of appearing in public, the defence, he regarded as so many trifling embarrassments, tiresome ceremonies of which it would be time to think when the day came. The prospect of death detained him almost as little: 'I shall think of that after the sentence.' Life was by no means tedious to him, he looked at everything in a fresh light. He had no ambition left. He thought rarely of Mademoiselle de La Mole. His remorse occupied him a great deal and often called up before him the image of Madame de Renal, especially in the silence of the night, disturbed only, in this lofty dungeon, by the cry of the osprey!

He thanked heaven for not having let him wound her mortally. 'An astonishing thing!' he said to himself, 'I thought that by her letter to M. de La Mole she had destroyed my future happiness for all time, and, in less than a fortnight after the date of that letter, I no longer think of all that was occupying my mind . . . Two or three thousand livres a year to live quietly in a mountain village like Vergy . . . I was happy then . . . I did not recognise my own happiness!'

At other moments, he would rise with a bound from his chair. ‘If I had wounded Madame de Renal mortally, I should have killed myself . . . I require that certainty to make me feel a horror of myself.,,,

‘Kill myself! That is the great question,’ he said to himself. Those judges so steeped in formalities, so thirsty for the blood of the wretched prisoner, who would have the best of citizens hanged in order to hang a Cross from their own buttonholes . . . I should remove myself from their power, from their insults in bad French, which the local newspaper will proceed to call eloquence.

‘I may live for five or six weeks still, more or less . . . Kill myself! Faith, no,’ he said to himself after a few days, ‘Napoleon lived . . .

‘Besides, life is pleasant to me; this is a quiet spot to stay in; I have no worries,’ he added, laughing, and set to work to make a list of the books which he wished to have sent to him from Paris.

Chapter 37

A Dungeon

The tomb of a friend.

STERNE

He heard a great din in the corridor; it was not the hour for visiting his cell; the osprey flew away screaming, the door opened, and the venerable cure Chelan, trembling all over and leaning upon his cane, flung himself into Julien's arms.

'Ah, great God! Is it possible, my child . . . Monster, I ought to say.'

And the good old man could not add another word. Julien was afraid of his falling. He was obliged to lead him to a chair. The hand of time had fallen heavily upon this man, so vigorous in days gone by. He appeared to Julien to be only the ghost of his former self.

When he had recovered his breath: 'Only the day before yesterday, I received your letter from Strasbourg, with your five hundred francs for the poor of Verrieres; it was brought to me up in the mountains at Liveru, where I have gone to live with my nephew Jean. Yesterday, I learned of the catastrophe . . . Oh, heavens! Is it possible?' The old man's tears ceased to flow, he seemed incapable of thought and added mechanically: 'You will need your five hundred francs, I have brought them back to you.'

'I need to see you, Father!' Julien exclaimed with emotion. 'I have plenty of money.'

But he could not extract any coherent answer. From time to time, M. Chelan shed a few tears which rolled in silence down his cheeks; then he gazed at Julien, and was almost stupefied at seeing him take his hands and raise them to his lips. That countenance, once so lively, and so vigorous in its expression of the noblest sentiments, was no longer to be aroused from a state of apathy. A sort of peasant came presently to fetch the old man. 'It does not do to tire him,' he said to Julien, who realised that this was the nephew. This visit left Julien plunged in bitter grief which stopped his tears. Everything seemed to him sad and comfortless; he felt his heart freeze in his bosom.

This was the most cruel moment that he had experienced since the crime. He had seen death face to face, and in all its ugliness. All the illusions of greatness of soul and generosity had been scattered like a cloud before the storm.

This fearful situation lasted for some hours. After moral poisoning, one requires physical remedies and a bottle of champagne. Julien would have deemed himself a coward had he had recourse to them. Towards the end of a horrible day, the whole of which he had spent in pacing the floor of his narrow dungeon: 'What a fool I am!' he exclaimed. 'It would be if I expected to die in my bed that the sight of that poor old man ought to make me so utterly wretched; but a swift death in the springtide of life is the very thing to save me from that miserable decrepitude.'

Whatever arguments he might thus advance, Julien found that he was moved like any pusillanimous creature and made wretched in consequence by this visit.

There was no longer any trace of rugged grandeur in him, any Roman virtue; death appeared to him on a higher plane, and as a thing less easily to be won.

'This shall be my thermometer,' he said to himself. This evening I am ten degrees below the level of courage that must lead me to the guillotine. This morning, I had that courage. What does it matter, after all? Provided that it returns to me at the right moment.' This idea of a thermometer amused him and succeeded finally in distracting him.

Next morning, on waking, he was ashamed of his behaviour the day before. ‘My happiness, my tranquillity are at stake.’ He almost made up his mind to write to the Attorney–General to ask that nobody should be admitted to his cell. ‘And Fouque?’ he thought. ‘If he can manage to come to Besancon, how distressed he will be.’

It was perhaps two months since he had given Fouque a thought. ‘I was an utter fool at Strasbourg, my thoughts never went beyond my coat collar.’ Memories of Fouque kept recurring to his mind and left him in a more tender mood. He paced the floor with agitation. ‘Now I am certainly twenty degrees below the level of death . . . If this weakness increases, it will pay me better to kill myself. What a joy for the abbe Maslons and the Valenods if I die here like a rat!’

Fouque arrived; the simple, honest fellow was shattered by grief. His sole idea, if he had one at all, was to sell all that he possessed in order to corrupt the gaoler and so save Julien’s life. He spoke to him for hours of the escape of M. de Lavalette.

‘You distress me,’ Julien said to him; ‘M. de Lavalette was innocent, I am guilty. Without meaning to do so, you make me realise the difference . . .

‘But is it true? What! You would sell all that you have?’ said Julien, suddenly becoming observant and suspicious once more.

Fouque, delighted to see his friend at last responsive to his dominant idea, explained to him in full detail, and to within a hundred francs or so, what he expected to receive for each of his properties.

‘What a sublime effort in a small landowner!’ thought Julien. ‘How many savings, how many little cheese-parings, which made me blush so when I saw him make them, he is willing to sacrifice for me! None of those fine young fellows whom I used to see at the Hotel de La Mole, who read Rene, would have any of his absurdities; but apart from those of them who are very young and have inherited fortunes, as well, and know nothing of the value of money, which of those fine Parisians would be capable of such a sacrifice?’

All Fouque's mistakes in grammer, all his vulgar mannerisms vanished, he flung himself into his arms. Never have the provinces, when contrasted with Paris, received a nobler homage. Fouque, delighted by the enthusiasm which he read in his friend's eyes, mistook it for consent to an escape.

This glimpse of the sublime restored to Julien all the strength of which M. Chelan's visit had robbed him. He was still very young; but, to my mind, he was a fine plant. Instead of his advancing from tenderness to cunning, like the majority of men, age would have given him an easy access to emotion, he would have been cured of an insane distrust . . . But what good is there in these vain predictions?

The examinations became more frequent, in spite of the efforts of Julien, whose answers were all aimed at cutting the whole business short. 'I have taken life, or at least I have sought to take life, and with premeditation,' he repeated day after day. But the magistrate was a formalist first and foremost. Julien's statements in no way cut short the examinations; the magistrate's feelings were hurt. Julien did not know that they had proposed to remove him to a horrible cellar, and that it was thanks to Fouque's intervention that he was allowed to remain in his charming room one hundred and eighty steps from the ground.

M. l'abbe de Frilair was one of the important persons who contracted with Fouque for the supply of their firewood. The honest merchant had access even to the all-powerful Vicar–General. To his inexpressible delight, M. de Frilair informed him that, touched by the good qualities of Julien and by the services which he had rendered in the past to the Seminary, he intended to intervene on his behalf with the judges. Fouque saw a hope of saving his friend, and on leaving his presence, bowing to the ground, begged the Vicar–General to expend upon masses, to pray for the acquittal of the prisoner, a sum of ten louis.

Fouque was strangely in error. M. de Frilair was by no means a Valenod. He refused, and even tried to make the worthy peasant understand that he would do better to keep his money in his pocket. Seeing that it was impossible to make his meaning clear without indiscretion, he advised him to distribute the sum in alms, for the poor prisoners, who, as a matter of fact, were in need of everything.

‘This Julien is a strange creature, his action is inexplicable,’ thought M. de Frilair, ‘and nothing ought to be inexplicable to me . . . Perhaps it will be possible to make a martyr of him . . . In any case, I shall get to the true inwardness of this business and may perhaps find an opportunity of inspiring fear in that Madame de Renal, who has no respect for us, and detests me in her heart . . . Perhaps I may even discover in all this some sensational means of reconciliation with M. de La Mole, who has a weakness for this little Seminarist.’

The settlement of the lawsuit had been signed some weeks earlier, and the abbe Pirard had left Besancon, not without having spoken of the mystery of Julien’s birth, on the very day on which the wretched fellow tried to kill Madame de Renal in the church of Verrieres.

Julien saw only one disagreeable incident in store for him before his death, namely a visit from his father. He consulted Fouque as to his idea of writing to the Attorney–General, asking to be excused any further visitors. This horror at the sight of a father, at such a moment, shocked the honest and respectable heart of the timber-merchant profoundly.

He thought he understood why so many people felt a passionate hatred of his friend. Out of respect for another’s grief, he concealed his feelings.

‘In any case,’ he replied coldly, ‘an order for solitary confinement would not apply to your father.’

Chapter 38

A Man of Power

But there is such mystery in her movements, such elegance in her form. Who can she be?

SCHILLER

The doors of the dungeon were thrown open at a very early hour the next morning. Julien awoke with a start.

‘Oh, good God,’ he thought, ‘here comes my father. What a disagreeable scene!’

At that moment, a woman dressed as a peasant flung herself into his arms; he had difficulty in recognising her. It was Mademoiselle de La Mole.

‘Miscreant, it was only from your letter that I learned where you were. What you call your crime, though it is nothing but a noble revenge which shows me all the loftiness of the heart that beats in your bosom, I learned only at Verrieres . . .’

Notwithstanding his prejudices against Mademoiselle de La Mole, prejudices of which, moreover, he had not himself formed any definite idea, Julien found her extremely good-looking. How could he fail to see in all this manner of speech and action a noble, disinterested sentiment, far above anything that a petty, vulgar spirit would have dared? He imagined once again that he was in love with a queen, and after a few moments it was with a rare nobility of speech and thought that he said to her:

‘The future was tracing itself quite clearly before my eyes. After my death, I married you to Croisenois, who would be marrying a widow. The noble but slightly romantic spirit of this charming widow, startled and converted to the service of common prudence by an event at once singular, tragic and for her momentous, would have deigned to appreciate the quite genuine merit of the young Marquis. You would have resigned yourself to enjoying the happiness of the rest of the world: esteem, riches, high rank . . . But, dear Mathilde, your coming to Besancon, if it is suspected, is going to be a mortal blow to M. de La Mole, and that is what I will never forgive myself. I have already caused him so much sorrow! The Academician will say that he has been warming a serpent in his bosom.’

‘I must confess that I hardly expected so much cold reasoning, so much thought for the future,’ said Mademoiselle de La Mole, half annoyed. ‘My maid, who is almost as prudent as yourself, procured a passport for herself, and it is in the name of Madame Michelet that I have travelled post.’

‘And Madame Michelet found it so easy to make her way in to me?’

‘Ah! You are still the superior man, the man of my choice! First of all, I offered a hundred francs to a magistrate’s secretary, who assured me that it was impossible for me to enter this dungeon. But after taking the money, this honest man made me wait, raised objections, I thought that he meant to rob me . . . ‘ She broke off.

‘Well?’ asked Julien.

‘Do not be angry with me, my little Julien,’ she said, embracing him, ‘I was obliged to give my name to this secretary, who took me for a young milliner from Paris, enamoured of the handsome Julien . . . Indeed, those are his very words. I swore to him that I was your wife, and I am to have permission to see you every day.’

‘That finishes everything,’ thought Julien; ‘I could not prevent it. After all, M. de La Mole is so great a nobleman that public opinion will easily find an excuse for the young Colonel who will wed this charming widow. My approaching death will cover everything’; and he abandoned himself with ecstasy to Mathilde’s love; there followed madness, magnanimity,

everything that was most strange. She seriously proposed to him that she should die with him.

After these first transports, and when she had grown used to the happiness of seeing Julien, a keen curiosity suddenly took possession of her soul. She examined her lover, and found him far superior to what she had imagined. Boniface de La Mole seemed to her reincarnate in him, but in a more heroic mould.

Mathilde saw the leading counsel of the place, whom she insulted by offering them gold too crudely; but they ended by accepting.

She speedily came to the conclusion that in doubtful matters of high import, everything in Besancon depended upon M. l'abbe de Frilair.

Under the obscure name of Madame Michelet, she at first found insuperable obstacles in the way to the presence of the all-powerful leader of the Congregation. But the rumour of the beauty of a young milliner, madly in love, who had come from Paris to Besancon to comfort the young abbe Julien Sorel, began to spread through the town.

Mathilde went alone and on foot through the streets of Besancon; she hoped that she might not be recognised. In any event, she thought that it must help her cause to create a strong impression upon the populace. In her folly she thought of making them revolt, to save Julien on his way to the scaffold. Mademoiselle de La Mole imagined herself to be dressed simply and in a manner becoming a woman stricken with grief; she was dressed in such a fashion as to attract every eye.

She was the sole object of attention in Besancon, when, after a week of solicitation, she obtained an audience of M. Frilair.

Great as her courage might be, the idea of an influential head of the Congregation and that of a profound and cautious rascality were so closely associated in her mind that she trembled as she rang the bell at the door of the Bishop's palace. She could barely stand when she had to climb the stair that led to the First Vicar–General's apartment. The loneliness of the episcopal palace chilled her with fear. 'I may sit down in an armchair, and

the armchair grip me by the arms, I shall have vanished. Of whom can my maid ask for news of me? The Captain of Police will decline to interfere . . . I am all alone in this great town!'

Her first sight of the apartment set Mademoiselle de La Mole's heart at rest. First of all, it was a footman in the most elegant livery that had opened the door to her. The parlour in which she was asked to wait displayed that refined and delicate luxury, so different from vulgar magnificence, which one finds in Paris only in the best houses. As soon as she caught sight of M. de Frilair, who came towards her with a fatherly air, all thoughts of a dastardly crime vanished. She did not even find on his handsome countenance the imprint of that energetic, that almost wild virtue, so antipathetic to Parisian society. The half-smile that animated the features of the priest who was in supreme control of everything at Besancon, betokened the man used to good society, the cultured prelate, the able administrator. Mathilde imagined herself in Paris.

It needed only a few minutes for M. de Frilair to lead Mathilde on to admit to him that she was the daughter of his powerful adversary, the Marquis de La Mole.

'I am not, as a matter of fact, Madame Michelet,' she said, resuming all the loftiness of her bearing, 'and this admission costs me little, for I have come to consult you, Sir, as to the possibility of procuring the escape of M. de La Vernaye. In the first place he is guilty of nothing worse than a piece of stupidity; the woman at whom he fired is doing well. In the second place, to corrupt the subordinates, I can put down here and now fifty thousand francs, and bind myself to pay double that sum. Lastly, my gratitude and the gratitude of my family will consider no request impossible from the person who has saved M. de La Vernaye.'

M. de Frilair appeared to be surprised at this name. Mathilde showed him a number of letters from the Ministry of War, addressed to M. Julien Sorel de La Vernaye.

'You see, Sir, that my father undertook to provide for his future. I married him secretly, my father wished him to be a senior officer before making public this marriage, which is a little odd for a La Mole.'

Mathilde remarked that the expression of benevolence and of a mild gaiety speedily vanished as M. de Frilair began to arrive at important discoveries. A subtlety blended with profound insincerity was portrayed on his features.

The abbe had his doubts, he perused the official documents once more slowly.

‘What advantage can I gain from these strange confidences?’ he asked himself. ‘Here I am suddenly brought into close personal contact with a friend of the famous Marechale de Fervaques, the all-powerful niece of the Lord Bishop of —— , through whom one becomes a Bishop in France.

‘What I have always regarded as hidden in the future suddenly presents itself. This may lead me to the goal of all my ambition.’

At first Mathilde was alarmed by the rapid change in the physiognomy of this powerful man, with whom she found herself shut up alone in a remote part of the building. ‘But why!’ she said to herself presently, ‘would it not have been worse to have made no impression upon the cold egoism of a priest sated with the enjoyment of power?’

Dazzled by this rapid and unexpected avenue to the episcopate that was opening before his eyes, astonished at Mathilde’s intelligence, for a moment M. de Frilair was off his guard. Mademoiselle de La Mole saw him almost at her feet, trembling nervously with the intensity of his ambition.

‘Everything becomes clear,’ she thought, ‘nothing will be impossible here for a friend of Madame de Fervaques.’ Despite a sense of jealousy that was still most painful, she found courage to explain that Julien was an intimate friend of the Marechale, and almost every evening used to meet, in her house, the Lord Bishop of —— .

‘If you were to draw by lot four or five times in succession a list of thirty-six jurymen from among the principal inhabitants of this Department,’ said the Vicar–General with the harsh glare of ambition, dwelling upon each of his words, ‘I should consider myself most unfortunate if in each list I did not find eight or nine friends, and those the most intelligent of the lot. Almost

invariably I should have a majority, more than that, even for a verdict of guilty; you see, Mademoiselle, with what ease I can secure an acquittal . . .”

The abbe broke off suddenly, as though startled by the sound of his words; he was admitting things which are never uttered to the profane.

But Mathilde in turn was stupefied when he informed her that what was most astonishing and interesting to Besancon society in Julien’s strange adventure, was that in the past he had inspired a grand passion in Madame de Renal, which he had long reciprocated. M. de Frilair had no difficulty in perceiving the extreme distress which his story produced.

‘I have my revenge!’ he thought. ‘Here, at last, is a way of controlling this decided young person; I was trembling lest I should not succeed in finding one.’ Her distinguished air, as of one not easily led, intensified in his eyes the charm of the rare beauty which he saw almost suppliant before him. He recovered all his self-possession and had no hesitation in turning the knife in the wound.

‘I should not be surprised after all,’ he said to her lightly, ‘were we to learn that it was from jealousy that M. Sorel fired two shots at this woman whom once he loved so dearly. She must have had some relaxation, and for some time past she had been seeing a great deal of a certain abbe Marquinot of Dijon, a sort of Jansenist, utterly without morals, like all of them.’

M. de Frilair went on torturing with voluptuous relish and at his leisure the heart of this beautiful girl, whose weak spot he had discovered.

‘Why,’ he said, fixing a pair of burning eyes on Mathilde, ‘should M. Sorel have chosen the church, if not because at that very moment his rival was celebrating mass there? Everyone agrees in ascribing boundless intelligence and even more prudence to the man who is so fortunate as to enjoy your protection. What more simple than to conceal himself in M. de Renal’s gardens, which he knows so well? There, with almost a certainty of not being seen, nor caught, nor suspected, he could have inflicted death on the woman of whom he was jealous.’

These arguments, apparently so well founded, reduced Mathilde to utter despair. Her spirit, haughty enough but saturated with all that dry prudence which passes in society as a faithful portrayal of the human heart, was not made to understand in a moment the joy of defying all prudence which can be so keen a joy to an ardent soul. In the upper classes of Parisian society, in which Mathilde had lived, passion can only very rarely divest itself of prudence, and it is from the attics on the fifth floor that girls throw themselves out of windows.

At last the abbe de Frilair was sure of his control. He gave Mathilde to understand (he was probably lying) that he could influence as he chose the Crown Counsel, who would have to support the charge against Julien.

After the names of the thirty-six jurors for the assize had been drawn by lot, he would make a direct and personal appeal to at least thirty of them.

If M. de Frilair had not thought Mathilde so good-looking, he would not have spoken to her in such plain terms until their fifth or sixth interview.

Chapter 39

Intrigue

Castres, 1676. — He that endeavoured to kill his sister in our house, had before killed a man, and it had cost his father five hundred ecus to get him off; by their secret distribution, gaining the favour of the counsellors.

LOCKE, Travels in France†

† I am indebted to the patience and ingenuity of Mr. Vyvyan Holland, who has traced the original text of this motto in The Life of John Locke, with extracts from his Correspondence, Journals and Commonplace Books by Lord King (new edition, 1830) C. K. S. M.]

On leaving the Bishop's palace, Mathilde did not hesitate to send a messenger to Madame de Fervaques; the fear of compromising herself did not restrain her for a second. She implored her rival to obtain a letter for M. de Frilair, written throughout in the hand of the Lord Bishop of —— . She even went the length of beseeching the other to hasten, herself, to Besancon. This was a heroic measure on the part of a proud and jealous spirit.

On the advice of Fouque, she had taken the precaution of saying nothing about what she was doing to Julien. Her presence was disturbing enough in itself. A more honourable man at the approach of death than he had been during his life, he now felt compunction at the thought not only of M. de La Mole, but also of Mathilde.

'What is this?' he asked himself, 'I experience in her company moments of abstraction and even of boredom. She is ruining herself for me, and it is thus that I reward her. Can I indeed be wicked?' This question would have

troubled him little when he was ambitious; then, not to succeed in life was the only disgrace in his eyes.

His moral uneasiness, in Mathilde's presence, was all the more marked, in that he inspired in her at that moment the most extraordinary and insensate passion. She could speak of nothing but the strange sacrifices which she was anxious to make to save him.

Carried away by a sentiment of which she was proud and which completely overbore her pride, she would have liked not to allow a moment of her life to pass that was not filled with some extraordinary action. The strangest plans, the most perilous to herself, formed the theme of her long conversations with Julien. His gaolers, well rewarded, allowed her to have her way in the prison. Mathilde's ideas were not confined to the sacrifice of her reputation; it mattered nothing to her though she made her condition known to the whole of society. To fling herself on her knees to crave pardon for Julien, in front of the King's carriage as it came by at a gallop, to attract the royal attention, at the risk of a thousand deaths, was one of the tamest fancies of this exalted and courageous imagination. Through her friends who held posts at court, she could count upon being admitted to the reserved parts of the park of Saint–Cloud.

Julien felt himself to be hardly worthy of such devotion, to tell the truth he was tired of heroism. It would have required a simple, artless, almost timid affection to appeal to him, whereas on the contrary, Mathilde's proud spirit must always entertain the idea of a public, of what people would say.

In the midst of all her anguish, of all her fears for the life of this lover, whom she was determined not to outlive, she had a secret longing to astonish the public by the intensity of her love and the sublimity of her actions.

He resented the discovery that he was unable to feel at all touched by all this heroism. What would his resentment have been, had he known of all the follies with which Mathilde overpowered the devoted, but eminently reasonable and limited mind of the good Fouque?

The latter could scarcely find fault with Mathilde's devotion; for he, too, would have sacrificed his whole fortune and exposed his life to the greatest

risks to save Julien. He was stupefied by the quantity of gold which Mathilde scattered abroad. At first, the sums thus spent impressed Fouque, who had for money all the veneration of a provincial.

Later, he discovered that Mademoiselle de La Mole's plans often varied, and, to his great relief, found a word with which to reproach this character which was so exhausting to him: she was changeable. To this epithet, that of wrongheaded, the direst anathema in the provinces, is the immediate sequel.

'It is strange,' Julien said to himself one day as Mathilde was leaving his prison, 'that so warm a passion, and one of which I am the object, leaves me so unmoved! And I worshipped her two months ago! I have indeed read that at the approach of death we lose interest in everything; but it is frightful to feel oneself ungrateful and to be unable to change. Can I be an egoist?' He heaped on himself, in this connection, the most humiliating reproaches.

Ambition was dead in his heart, another passion had risen from its ashes; he called it remorse for having murdered Madame de Renal.

As a matter of fact, he was hopelessly in love with her. He found a strange happiness when, left absolutely alone and without any fear of being disturbed, he could abandon himself entirely to the memory of the happy days which he had spent in the past at Verrieres or at Vergy. The most trifling incidents of that time, too swiftly flown, had for him a freshness and a charm that were irresistible. He never gave a thought to his Parisian successes; they bored him.

This tendency, which grew rapidly stronger, was not entirely hidden from the jealous Mathilde. She saw quite plainly that she had to contend with the love of solitude. Now and again, she uttered with terror in her heart the name of Madame de Renal. She saw Julien shudder. From that moment, her passion knew no bounds nor measure.

'If he dies, I die after him,' she said to herself with absolute sincerity. 'What would the drawing-rooms of Paris say, to see a girl of my rank carry to such a point her adoration of a lover condemned to death? To find such sentiments, we must go back to the days of the heroes; it was love of this nature that set hearts throbbing in the age of Charles IX and Henri III.'

Amid the most impassioned transports, when she pressed Julien's head to her heart: 'What!' she said to herself with horror, 'can this precious head be doomed to fall? Very well!' she added, inflamed by a heroism that was not devoid of happiness, 'my lips, which are now pressed against these dear locks, will be frozen within twenty-four hours after.'

Memories of these moments of heroism and fearful ecstasy seized her in an ineluctable grip. The thought of suicide, so absorbing in itself, and hitherto so remote from that proud spirit, penetrated its defences and soon reigned there with an absolute sway. 'No, the blood of my ancestors has not grown lukewarm in its descent to me,' Mathilde told herself proudly.

'I have a favour to ask you,' her lover said to her one day: Put your child out to nurse at Verrieres, Madame de Renal will look after the nurse.'

'That is a very harsh saying . . .' Mathilde turned pale.

'True, and I ask a thousand pardons,' cried Julien, awakening from his dream and pressing her to his bosom.

Having dried her tears, he returned to the subject of his thoughts, but with more subtlety. He had given the conversation a turn of melancholy philosophy. He spoke of that future which was soon to close for him. 'You must agree, my dear friend, that the passions are an accident in life, but this accident is to be found only in superior beings . . . The death of my son would be in reality a relief to the pride of your family, so much the subordinate agents will perceive. Neglect will be the lot of that child of misery and shame . . . I hope that at a date which I do not wish to specify, which however I have the courage to anticipate, you will obey my final behest: You will marry the Marquis de Croisenois.'

'What, dishonoured!'

'Dishonour can have no hold over such a name as yours. You will be a widow, and the widow of a madman, that is all. I shall go farther: my crime, being free from any pecuniary motive, will be in no way dishonouring. Perhaps by that time some philosophical legislator will have secured, from the prejudices of his contemporaries, the suppression of capital punishment.

Then, some friendly voice will cite as an instance: “Why, Mademoiselle de La Mole’s first husband was mad, but not a wicked man, he was no criminal. It was absurd to cut his head off . . . “ Then my memory will cease to be infamous; at least, after a certain time . . . Your position in society, your fortune, and, let me say, your genius will enable M. de Croisenois to play a part, once he is your husband, to which by himself he could not hope to attain.

He has only his birth and his gallantry, and those qualities by themselves, which made a man accomplished in 1729, are an anachronism a hundred years later, and only give rise to pretensions. A man must have other things besides if he is to place himself at the head of the youth of France.

‘You will bring the support of a firm and adventurous character to the political party in which you will place your husband. You may succeed the Chevreuses and Longuevilles of the Fronde . . . But by then, my dear friend, the heavenly fire which animates you at this moment will have cooled a little.

‘Allow me to tell you,’ he went on, after many other preliminary phrases, ‘in fifteen years from now you will regard as an act of folly, pardonable but still an act of folly, the love that you have felt for me . . .’

He broke off abruptly and returned to his dreams. He found himself once again confronted by that idea, so shocking to Mathilde: ‘In fifteen years Madame de Renal will adore my son, and you will have forgotten him.’

Chapter 40

Tranquillity

It is because I was foolish then that I am now wise. O philosopher who see nothing save in a flash, how short is your vision! Your eye is not made to follow the underground working of the passions.

FRAU VON GOETHE

This conversation was interrupted by a judicial examination, followed by a conference with the lawyer retained for the defence. These were the only absolutely disagreeable moments in a heedless existence full of tender fantasies.

‘It was murder, and premeditated murder,’ said Julien to magistrate and counsel alike. ‘I am sorry, gentlemen,’ he added, smiling; ‘but this reduces your task to a very small matter.

‘After all,’ thought Julien, when he had succeeded in ridding himself of these two persons, ‘I must be brave, and braver, evidently, than these two men. They regard as the worst of evils, as the king of terrors, this duel to a fatal issue, of which I shall begin to think seriously only upon the day itself.

‘That is because I have known a greater evil,’ Julien continued, philosophising to himself. ‘I suffered far more keenly on my first journey to Strasbourg, when I thought that I had been abandoned by Mathilde . . . And to think that I longed with such passion for this perfect intimacy which today leaves me so unmoved! Indeed, I am happier by myself than when that lovely girl shares my solitude . . .’

The lawyer, a man of rules and formalities, thought him mad, and supposed, with the rest of the public, that it was jealousy that had put the pistol in his hand. One day, he ventured to suggest to Julien that this allegation, whether true or false, would be an excellent line of defence. But the prisoner became in a flash passionate and incisive.

'On your life, Sir,' cried Julien beside himself with rage, 'bear in mind never again to utter that abominable falsehood.' The prudent advocate was afraid for a moment of being murdered himself.

He prepared his defence, because the decisive moment was rapidly approaching. Besancon and the whole Department could talk of nothing but this cause celebre. Julien was in ignorance of this, he had begged that no one should ever speak to him of such matters.

That very day, Fouque and Mathilde having sought to inform him of certain public rumours, which seemed to them to furnish grounds for hope, Julien had cut them short at the first word.

'Leave me to enjoy my ideal life. Your petty bickerings, your details of real life, all more or less irritating to me, would bring me down from heaven. One dies as best one can; as for me, I wish to think of death only in my own way. What do I care for other people? My relations with other people are soon to be cut short. For pity's sake, do not speak to me of them again: it is quite enough to have to see the magistrate and my counsel.

'Indeed,' he said to himself, 'it appears to be my destiny to die in a dream. An obscure creature, like myself, sure of being forgotten within a fortnight, would indeed be foolish, one must admit, were he to play a part . . .

'It is strange, all the same, that I have learned the art of enjoying life only now that I see its term draw so near.'

He spent these last days in pacing the narrow terrace on the roof of his dungeon, smoking some excellent cigars for which Mathilde had sent a courier to Holland, and with no suspicion that his appearance was daily awaited by all the telescopes in the town. His thoughts were at Vergy. Never did he speak of Madame de Renal to Fouque, but on two or three occasions

this friend told him that she was recovering rapidly, and these words echoed in his heart.

While Julien's spirit was almost always completely lost in the world of ideas, Mathilde, occupied with realities, as becomes an aristocratic heart, had contrived to increase the intimacy of the direct correspondence between Madame de Fervaques and M. de Frilair to such a point that already the mighty word Bishopric had been uttered.

The venerable prelate, in whose hands was the list of benefices, added as a postscript to one of his niece's letters: 'That poor Sorel is nothing worse than a fool, I hope that he will be restored to us.'

At the sight of these lines, M. de Frilair was almost out of his mind. He had no doubt of his ability to save Julien.

'But for that Jacobinical law which prescribes the registration of an endless list of jurors, and has no other real object than to take away all influence from well-born people,' he said to Mathilde, on the eve of the drawing by lot of the thirty-six jurors for the assize, 'I could have answered for the verdict. Did I not secure the acquittal of the cure N —— ?'

It was with pleasure that, on the following day, among the names drawn from the urn, M. de Frilair found those of five members of the Congregation of Besancon, and, among those who were strangers to the town, the names of MM. Valenod, de Moirod and de Cholin. 'I can answer at once for these eight jurors,' he told Mathilde. 'The first five are machines. Valenod is my agent, Moirod owes all he has to me, Cholin is an imbecile, who is afraid of everything.'

The newspaper published throughout the Department the names of the jurors, and Madame de Renal, to the inexpressible terror of her husband, decided to come to Besancon. All that M. de Renal could obtain from her was that she would not leave her bed, so that she might not be exposed to the nuisance of being summoned to give evidence. 'You do not understand my position,' said the former Mayor of Verrieres. 'I am now a Liberal of the defection, as they call it; no doubt but that rascal Valenod and M. de Frilair

will easily persuade the Attorney General and the Judges to anything that can be unpleasant for me.'

Madame de Renal yielded without protest to her husband's orders, 'ïf I were to appear at the Assize Court,' she told herself, 'I should seem to be demanding vengeance.'

Notwithstanding all the promises of prudence made to her spiritual director and to her husband, no sooner had she arrived in Besancon than she wrote with her own hand to each of the thirty-six jurors:

'I shall not appear in Court upon the day of the trial, Sir, because my presence might prejudice M. Sorel's case. I desire but one thing in the world, and that passionately, namely his acquittal. Be assured of this, the terrible thought that on my account an innocent man has been sent to his death would poison the remainder of my life, and would doubtless shorten it. How could you sentence him to death, while I still live? No, beyond question, society has not the right to take life, especially from such a man as Julien Sorel. Everyone at Verrieres has seen him in moments of distraction. This poor young man has powerful enemies; but, even among his enemies (and how many they are!) who is there that has any doubt of his admirable talents and his profound learning? It is not an ordinary person that you are about to judge, Sir. For nearly eighteen months we have all known him to be pious, wise, studious; but, two or three times in the year, he was seized by fits of melancholy which bordered on insanity. The whole town of Verrieres, all our neighbours at Vergy where we go in the fine weather, all my family, the Sub–Prefect himself, will bear testimony to his exemplary piety; he knows by heart the whole of the Holy Bible. Would an unbeliever have applied himself for years on end to learning the Holy Scriptures? My sons will have the honour to present this letter to you: they are children. Deign to question them, Sir, they will furnish you with all the details relative to this poor young man that may still be necessary to convince you of the barbarity of condemning him. Far from avenging me, you would be sentencing me to death.

'What is there that his enemies can advance in rebuttal of the following fact? The injury that ensued from one of those moments of insanity which my children themselves used to remark in their tutor was so far from dangerous

that within less than two months, it has allowed me to post from Verrieres to Besancon. If I learn, Sir, that you have even the slightest hesitation in saving from the barbarity of our laws a person who is so little guilty, I shall leave my bed, to which I am confined solely by my husband's orders, and shall come to throw myself at your feet.

'Declare, Sir, that the premeditation is not proven, and you will not have to reproach yourself with the blood of an innocent man,' etc., etc.

Chapter 41

The Trial

The country will remember this celebrated trial for a long time to come. Interest in the accused reached fever pitch; this was because his crime was astonishing and yet not atrocious. Even if it had been, the young man was so handsome! His great destiny abruptly cut short heightened the pity felt for him. Will he be condemned? the women would ask the men of their acquaintance and one could see them grow pale as they awaited the reply.

SAINTE-BEUVE

At length the day dawned so dreaded by Madame de Renal and Mathilde.

The strange appearance of the town increased their terror, and did not leave even Fouque's stout heart unmoved. The whole Province had swarmed into Besancon to witness the trial of this romantic case.

For some days past there had not been a bed to be had in the inns. The President of the Assize Court was assailed with requests for cards of admission; all the ladies of the town wished to be present at the trial; Julien's portrait was hawked through the streets, etc., etc.

Mathilde was keeping in reserve for this supreme moment a letter written throughout in the hand of the Lord Bishop of —— . This Prelate, who controlled the Church in France and appointed Bishops, deigned to ask for the acquittal of Julien. On the eve of the trial, Mathilde took this letter to the all-powerful Vicar–General.

At the close of the interview, as she was leaving the room in a flood of tears: ‘I answer for the verdict of the jury,’ M. de Frilair told her, emerging at length from his diplomatic reserve, and almost showing signs of emotion himself. ‘Among the twelve persons charged with the duty of finding whether your protege’s crime is proven, and especially whether there was premeditation, I number six friends devoted to my welfare, and I have given them to understand that it rested with them to raise me to the episcopate. Baron de Valenod, whom I have made Mayor of Verrieres, has entire control over two of his subordinates, MM. de Moirod and de Cholin. To tell the truth, chance has given us, for dealing with this affair, two jurors who are extremely disaffected; but, although Ultra–Liberals, they loyally obey my orders on great occasions, and I have sent word asking them to vote with M. Valenod. I learn that a sixth juror of the industrial class, an immensely rich and garrulous Liberal, is secretly hoping for a contract from the Ministry of War, and no doubt he would not wish to vex me. I have let him know that M. Valenod has my last word.’

‘And who is this M. Valenod?’ said Mathilde, anxiously.

‘If you knew him, you would have no doubt of our success. He is a bold speaker, impudent, coarse, a man made to be the leader of fools. 1814 raised him from penury, and I am going to make him a Prefect. He is capable of thrashing the other jurors if they refuse to vote as he wishes.’

Mathilde was somewhat reassured.

There was another discussion in store for her that evening. In order not to prolong a painful scene, the outcome of which appeared to him certain, Julien was determined not to open his mouth.

‘My counsel will speak, that is quite sufficient,’ he said to Mathilde. ‘As it is, I shall be all too long exposed as a spectacle to my enemies. These provincials are shocked by the rapid advancement which I owe to you, and, believe me, there is not one of them that does not wish for my conviction, except that he will cry like a fool when I am led to the scaffold.’

‘They wish to see you humiliated, it is only too true,’ replied Mathilde, ‘but I do not believe that they are cruel. My presence in Besancon and the

spectacle of my grief have interested all the women; your handsome face will do the rest. If you say but one word before your judges, the whole court will be on your side,' etc., etc.

The following morning at nine o'clock, when Julien came down from his prison to enter the great hall of the Law Courts, it was with the utmost difficulty that the gendarmes succeeded in clearing a passage through the immense crowd that packed the courtyard. Julien had slept well, he was quite calm, and felt no other sentiment than one of philosophical piety towards this crowd of envious persons who, without cruelty, were ready to applaud his sentence of death. He was quite surprised when, having been detained for more than a quarter of an hour among the crowd, he was obliged to admit that his presence was inspiring a tender pity in the assembly. He did not hear a single unpleasant remark. 'These provincials are less evil-minded than I supposed,' he said to himself.

On entering the court, he was struck by the elegance of the architecture. It was pure gothic, with a number of charming little pillars carved in stone with the most perfect finish. He imagined himself in England.

But presently his whole attention was absorbed in twelve or fifteen pretty women who, seated opposite the dock, filled the three galleries above the bench and the jurybox. On turning round towards the public seats, he saw that the circular gallery which overhung the well of the court was filled with women; most of them were young and seemed to him extremely pretty; their eyes were bright and full of interest. In the rest of the court, the crowd was enormous; people were struggling at the doors, and the sentries were unable to preserve silence.

When all the eyes that were looking for Julien became aware of his presence, on seeing him take his place on the slightly raised bench reserved for the prisoner, he was greeted with a murmur of astonishment and tender interest.

One would have said that morning that he was not yet twenty; he was dressed quite simply, but with a perfect grace; his hair and brow were charming; Mathilde had insisted on presiding in person over his toilet. His pallor was intense. As soon as he had taken his seat on the bench, he heard

people say on all sides: ‘Lord, how young he is! . . . ‘ ‘But he is a boy.’ ‘He is far better looking than his portrait.’

‘Prisoner,’ said the gendarme seated on his right, ‘do you see those six ladies who are on that balcony?’ The gendarme pointed to a little gallery which jutted out above the amphitheatre in which the jury was placed. ‘That is the Prefect’s lady,’ the gendarme continued; ‘next to her, Madame la Marquise de M —— ; that one loves you dearly. I heard her speak to the examining magistrate. Next to her is Madame Derville.’

‘Madame Derville,’ exclaimed Julien, and a vivid blush suffused his brow. ‘When she leaves the court,’ he thought, ‘she will write to Madame de Renal.’ He knew nothing of Madame de Renal’s arrival at Besancon.

The witnesses were quickly heard. At the first words of the speech for the prosecution made by the counsel for the prosecution, two of the ladies seated on the little balcony burst into tears. ‘Madame Derville is not so easily moved,’ thought Julien. He noticed, however, that she was extremely flushed.

The counsel for the prosecution was labouring an emotional point in bad French about the barbarity of the crime that had been committed; Julien noticed that Madame Derville’s neighbours showed signs of strong disapproval. Several of the jury, evidently friends of these ladies, spoke to them and seemed to reassure them. ‘That can only be a good sign,’ thought Julien.

Until then he had felt himself penetrated by an unmixed contempt for all the men who were taking part in this trial. The insipid eloquence of the counsel for the prosecution increased this sense of disgust. But gradually the sereneness of Julien’s heart melted before the marks of interest of which he was plainly the object.

He was pleased with the firm expression of his counsel. ‘No fine language,’ he murmured to him as he stood up to speak.

‘All the emphasis stolen from Bossuet, which has been displayed against you, has helped your case,’ said the counsel. And indeed, he had not been

speaking for five minutes before almost all the ladies had their handkerchiefs in their hands. The counsel, encouraged by this, addressed the jury in extremely strong language. Julien shuddered, he felt that he was on the point of bursting into tears. ‘Great God! What will my enemies say?’

He was about to yield to the emotion that was overpowering him, when, fortunately for himself, he caught an insolent glance from M. Valenod.

‘That wretch’s eyes are ablaze,’ he said to himself; ‘what a triumph for that vile nature! Had my crime led to this alone, I should be bound to abhor it. Heaven knows what he will say of me to Madame de Renal!’

This thought obliterated all the rest. Shortly afterwards, Julien was recalled to himself by sounds of approval from the public. His counsel had just concluded his speech. Julien remembered that it was the correct thing to shake hands with him. The time had passed quickly.

Refreshments were brought to counsel and prisoner. It was only then that Julien was struck by a curious circumstance: none of the women had left the court for dinner.

‘Faith, I am dying of hunger,’ said his counsel, ‘and you?’

‘I am also,’ replied Julien.

‘Look, there is the Prefect’s lady getting her dinner, too,’ his counsel said to him, pointing to the little balcony. ‘Cheer up, everything is going well.’ The trial was resumed.

As the President was summing up, midnight struck. He was obliged to pause; amid the silence of the universal anxiety, the echoing notes of the clock filled the court.

‘Here begins the last day of my life,’ thought Julien. Presently he felt himself inflamed by the idea of duty. He had kept his emotion in check until then, and maintained his determination not to speak; but when the President of the Assizes asked him if he had anything to say, he rose. He saw in front of him the eyes of Madame Derville, which, in the lamplight, seemed to shine with a strange brilliance. ‘Can she be crying, by any chance,’ he wondered.

‘Gentlemen of the Jury,

‘My horror of the contempt which I believed that I could endure at the moment of my death, impels me to speak. Gentlemen, I have not the honour to belong to your class, you see in me a peasant who has risen in revolt against the lowliness of his station.

‘I ask you for no mercy,’ Julien went on, his voice growing stronger. ‘I am under no illusion; death is in store for me; it will be a just punishment. I have been guilty of attempting the life of the woman most worthy of all respect, of all devotion. Madame de Renal had been like a mother to me. My crime is atrocious, and it was premeditated. I have, therefore, deserved death, Gentlemen of the Jury. But, even were I less guilty, I see before me men who, without pausing to consider what pity may be due to my youth, will seek to punish in me and to discourage forever that class of young men who, born in an inferior station and in a sense burdened with poverty, have the good fortune to secure a sound education, and the audacity to mingle with what the pride of rich people calls society.

‘That is my crime, Gentlemen, and it will be punished with all the more severity inasmuch as actually I am not being tried by my peers. I do not see, anywhere among the jury, a peasant who has grown rich, but only indignant bourgeois . . .’

For twenty minutes Julien continued to speak in this strain; he said everything that was in his heart; the counsel for the prosecution, who aspired to the favour of the aristocracy, kept springing from his seat; but in spite of the somewhat abstract turn which Julien had given the debate, all the women were dissolved in tears. Madame Derville herself had her handkerchief pressed to her eyes. Before concluding, Julien returned to the question of premeditation, to his repentance, to the respect, the filial and unbounded adoration which, in happier times, he had felt for Madame de Renal . . . Madame Derville uttered a cry and fainted.

One o’clock struck as the jury retired to their waiting-room. None of the women had left their seats; several of the men had tears in their eyes. The general conversation was at first most lively; but gradually, as the jury delayed their verdict, the feeling of weariness spread a calm over the

assembly. It was a solemn moment; the lamps burned more dimly. Julien, who was dead tired, heard them discussing round him whether this delay augured well or ill. He noticed with pleasure that everyone was on his side; the jury did not return, and still not a woman left the court.

Just as two o'clock had struck, a general stir was audible. The little door of the jury-room opened. M. le Baron de Valenod advanced with a grave, theatrical step, followed by the rest of the jury. He coughed, then declared that on his soul and conscience the unanimous opinion of the jury was that Julien Sorel was guilty of murder, and of murder with premeditation: this verdict inferred a sentence of death; it was pronounced a moment later. Julien looked at his watch, and remembered M. de Lavalette; it was a quarter past two. Today is Friday,' he thought.

'Yes, but this is a lucky day for Valenod, who is sentencing me . . . I am too closely guarded for Mathilde to be able to effect my escape, like Madame de Lavalette . .. And so, in three days, at this same hour, I shall know what to think of the great hereafter.'

At that moment, he heard a cry and was recalled to the things of this world. The women round him were sobbing; he saw that every face was turned towards a little gallery concealed by the capital of a gothic pilaster. He learned afterwards that Mathilde had been hidden there. As the cry was not repeated, everyone turned back to look at Julien, for whom the gendarmes were trying to clear a passage through the crowd.

'Let us try not to give that rascal Valenod any food for laughter,' thought Julien. 'With what a contrite and coaxing air he uttered the verdict that involved the death penalty! Whereas that poor president, even though he has been a judge for all these years, had tears in his eyes when he sentenced me. What a joy for Valenod to have his revenge for our old rivalry for Madame de Renal! And so I shall never see her any more! It is all finished . . . A last farewell is impossible between us, I feel it . . . How happy I should have been to express to her all the horror I feel for my crime!

'These words only: I feel that I am justly condemned.'

Chapter 42

In the Prison

When Julien was lee back to prison he had been put in a cell reserved for those under sentence of death. He, who, as a rule, observed the most trifling details, had never noticed that he was not being taken up to his old dungeon. He was thinking of what he would say to Madame de Renal, if, before the fatal moment, he should have the good fortune to see her. He felt that she would not allow him to speak, and was seeking a way of expressing his repentance in the first words he would utter. ‘After such an action, how am I to convince her that I love her and her only? For after all I sought to kill her either out of ambition or for love of Mathilde.’

On getting into bed he found himself between sheets of a coarse cloth. The scales fell from his eyes. ‘Ah! I am in the condemned cell,’ he said to himself, ‘awaiting my sentence. It is right . . .

‘Conte Altamira told me once that, on the eve of his death, Danton said in his loud voice: “It is strange, the verb to guillotine cannot be conjugated in all its tenses; one can say: I shall be guillotined, thou shalt be guillotined, but one does not say: I have been guillotined.”

‘Why not,’ Julien went on, ‘if there is another life? Faith, if I meet the Christian Deity, I am lost: He is a tyrant, and, as such, is full of ideas of vengeance; His Bible speaks of nothing but fearful punishments. I never loved Him! I could never even believe that anyone did love Him sincerely. He is devoid of pity.’ (Here Julien recalled several passages from the Bible.) ‘He will punish me in some abominable manner . . .

‘But if I meet the God of Fenelon! He will say to me perhaps: “Much shall be pardoned thee, because thou hast loved much . . .”

‘Have I loved much? Ah! I did love Madame de Renal, but my conduct has been atrocious. There, as elsewhere, I abandoned a simple and modest merit for what was brilliant . . .

‘But then, what a prospect! Colonel of Hussars, should we go to war; Secretary of Legation in time of peace; after that, Ambassador . . . for I should soon have learned the business . . . and had I been a mere fool, need the son-inlaw of the Marquis de La Mole fear any rival? All my foolish actions would have been forgiven me, or rather counted to me as merits. A man of distinction, enjoying the most splendid existence in Vienna or London . . .

‘Not precisely that, Sir, to be guillotined in three days’ time.’

Julien laughed heartily at this sally of his own wit. ‘Indeed, man has two different beings inside him,’ he reflected. ‘What devil thought of that malicious touch?

‘Very well, yes, my friend, guillotined in three days’ time,’ he replied to the interrupter. ‘M. de Cholin will hire a window, sharing the expense with the abbe Maslon. Well, for the cost of hiring that window, which of those two worthies will rob the other?’

A passage from Rotrou’s Venceslas entered his head suddenly.

Ladislas: My soul is well prepared. The King (his father): So is the scaffold; lay your head thereon.

‘A good answer,’ he thought, and fell asleep. Someone awakened him in the morning by shaking him violently.

‘What, already!’ said Julien, opening a haggard eye. He imagined himself to be in the headsman’s hands.

It was Mathilde. ‘Fortunately, she did not understand.’ This reflection restored all his presence of mind. He found Mathilde changed as though after six months of illness: she was positively unrecognisable.

‘That wretch Frilair has betrayed me,’ she said to him, wringing her hands; rage prevented her from speaking.

‘Was I not fine yesterday when I rose to speak?’ replied Julien. ‘I was improvising, and for the first time in my life! It is true that there is reason to fear it may also be the last.’

At this moment Julien was playing upon Mathilde’s nature with all the calm of a skilled pianist touching the keys of a piano . . . ‘The advantage of noble birth I lack, it is true,’ he went on, ‘but the great heart of Mathilde has raised her lover to her own level. Do you suppose that Boniface de La Mole cut a better figure before his judges?’

Mathilde, that morning, was tender without affectation, like any poor girl dwelling in an attic; but she could not win from him any simpler speech. He paid her back, unconsciously, the torment that she had often inflicted on him.

‘We do not know the source of the Nile,’ Julien said to himself; ‘it has not been granted to the eye of man to behold the King of Rivers in the form of a simple rivulet: similarly no human eye shall ever see Julien weak, if only because he is not weak. But I have a heart that is easily moved; the most commonplace words, if they are uttered with an accent of truth, may soften my voice and even make my tears begin to flow. How often have not the sere hearts despised me for this defect! They believed that I was begging for mercy: that is what I cannot endure.

‘They say that the thought of his wife overcame Danton at the foot of the scaffold; but Danton had given strength to a nation of coxcombs, and prevented the enemy from reaching Paris . . I alone know what I might have managed to do . . . To others, I am at best only a might-have-been.

‘If Madame de Renal had been here, in my cell, instead of Mathilde, should I have been able to control myself? The intensity of my despair and of my repentance would have appeared in the eyes of the Valenods, and of all the patricians of the neighbourhood, a craven fear of death; they are so proud, those feeble hearts, whom their financial position places out of reach of temptation! “You see what it is,” M. de Moirod and M. de Cholin, who have just sentenced me to death, would have said, “to be born the son of a

carpenter! One may become learned, clever, but courage! . . . Courage is not taught at school." Even this poor Mathilde, who is now weeping, or rather who can no longer weep,' he said, looking at her red eyes . . . and he took her in his arms: the sight of genuine grief made him forget his syllogism. 'She has been weeping all night, perhaps,' he said to himself: 'but one day how ashamed she will be when she remembers! She will regard herself as having been led astray, in early youth, by the low opinions of a plebeian . . . Croisenois is weak enough to marry her, and, i' faith, he will do well for himself. She will make him play a part,

"By that right

Which a firm spirit planning vast designs

Has o'er the loutish minds of common men."

'Ah, now; here is a pleasant thing: now that I am to die, all the poetry I ever learned in my life comes back to me. It must be a sign of decadence . . .'

Mathilde kept on saying to him in a faint voice: 'He is there, in the next room.' At length he began to pay attention to her words. 'Her voice is feeble,' he thought, 'but all her imperious nature is still in its accents. She lowers her voice in order not to lose her temper.

'Who is there?' he asked her gently.

'The lawyer, to make you sign your appeal.'

'I shall not appeal.'

'What! You will not appeal,' she said, rising to her feet, her eyes ablaze with anger, 'and why not, if you please?'

'Because at this moment I feel that I have the courage to die without exciting undue derision. And who can say that in two months' time, after a long

confinement in this damp cell, I shall be so well prepared? I foresee interviews with priests, with my father . . . I can imagine nothing so unpleasant. Let us die.'

This unexpected obstinacy awoke all the latent pride in Mathilde's nature. She had not been able to see the abbe de Frilair before the hour at which the cells in the prison of Besancon were opened; her anger fell upon Julien. She adored him, and for the next quarter of an hour he was reminded by her imprecations against his character, her regrets that she had ever loved him, of that proud spirit which in the past had heaped such poignant insults upon him, in the library of the Hotel de La Mole.

'Heaven owed it to the glory of your race to bring you into the world a man,' he told her.

'But as for myself,' he thought, 'I should be a rare fool to live two months longer in this disgusting abode, the butt of all the infamous and humiliating lies that the patrician faction is capable of inventing,† my sole comfort the imprecations of this madwoman . . . Well, the day after tomorrow, I shall be fighting a duel in the morning with a man well known for his coolness and for his remarkable skill . . . Very remarkable,' whispered Mephistopheles, 'he never misses his stroke.

† A Jacobin is speaking. (Stendhal's note.)]

'Very well, so be it, all's well that ends well.' (Mathilde's eloquence continued to flow.) 'Begad, no,' he said to himself, 'I shall not appeal.'

Having made this decision, he relapsed into his dreams . . . 'The postman on his rounds will bring the newspaper at six o'clock, as usual; at eight, after M. de Renal has read it, Elisa, entering the room on tiptoe, will lay it down on her bed. Later, she will awake: suddenly, as she reads, she will grow troubled; her lovely hand will tremble; she will come to the words: At five minutes past ten he had ceased to live.

'She will shed hot tears, I know her; in vain did I seek to murder her, all will be forgotten, and the person whose life I sought to take will be the only one who will weep sincerely for my death.

‘Ah, this is a paradox!’ he thought, and, for the next quarter of an hour, while Mathilde continued to make a scene, he thought only of Madame de Renal. In spite of himself, and albeit frequently replying to what Mathilde said to him, he could not free his mind from the memory of that bedroom at Verrieres. He saw the Gazette de Besancon lying on the counterpane of orange taffeta. He saw that snowy hand clutching it with a convulsive movement; he saw Madame de Renal weep . . . He followed the course of each tear over that charming face. Mademoiselle de La Mole, having failed to get anything out of Julien, made the lawyer come in. He was fortunately an old Captain of the Army of Italy, of 1796, when he had served with Manuel.

For the sake of form, he opposed the condemned man’s decision. Julien, wishing to treat him with respect, explained all his reasons to him.

‘Faith, one may think as you do,’ M. Felix Vaneau (this was the lawyer’s name) said to him at length. ‘But you have three clear days in which to appeal, and it is my duty to come back each day. If a volcano opened beneath the prison, in the next two months, you would be saved. You may die a natural death,’ he said, looking at Julien.

Julien shook his hand. ‘I thank you, you are an honest man. I shall think it over.’

And when Mathilde left him, finally, with the lawyer, he felt far more affection for the lawyer than for her.

Chapter 43

Last Adieux

An hour later, when he was fast asleep, he was awakened by the tears which he felt trickling over his hand. ‘Ah! Mathilde again,’ he thought to himself, half awake. ‘She has come, faithful to her theory, to attack my resolve by force of tender sentiments.’ Irritated by the prospect of this fresh scene in the pathetic manner, he did not open his eyes. The lines of Belphegor flying from his wife came into his mind.

He heard a strange sigh; he opened his eyes; it was Madame de Renal.

‘Ah! Do I see you again before my death? Is it a phantom?’ he cried, as he flung himself at her feet.

‘But forgive me, Madame, I am nothing but a murderer in your eyes,’ he at once added, regaining his composure.

‘Sir, . . . I have come to implore you to appeal, I know that you do not wish to . . . ‘ She was choked by her sobs; she was unable to speak.

‘Deign to forgive me.’

‘If you wish me to forgive you,’ she said to him, rising and throwing herself into his arms, ‘appeal at once from the sentence of death.’

Julien covered her with kisses.

‘Will you come and see me every day during the next two months?’

‘I swear it to you. Every day, unless my husband forbids me.’

‘Then I sign!’ cried Julien. ‘What! You forgive me! Is it possible?’

He clasped her in his arms; he was mad. She uttered a faint cry.

‘It is nothing,’ she told him, ‘you hurt me.’

‘In your shoulder,’ cried Julien, bursting into tears. He stepped back from her, and covered her hand with burning kisses. ‘Who would ever have said, last time I saw you, in your bedroom, at Verrieres . . .?’

‘Who would ever have said then that I should write M. de La Mole that infamous letter . . .?’

‘Know that I have always loved you, that I have never loved anyone but you.’

‘Is it really possible?’ cried Madame de Renal, equally enraptured. She bowed herself over Julien, who was kneeling at her feet, and for a long time they wept in silence.

At no time in his life had Julien experienced such a moment.

After a long interval, when they were able to speak:

‘And that young Madame Michele!’ said Madame de Renal, ‘or rather that Mademoiselle de La Mole; for I am beginning really to believe this strange tale!’

‘It is true only in appearance,’ replied Julien. ‘She is my wife, but she is not my mistress . . .’

And, each interrupting the other a hundred times, they managed with difficulty, each of them, to tell what the other did not know. The letter sent to M. de La Mole had been written by the young priest who directed Madame de Renal’s conscience, and then copied out by her. ‘What a terrible crime religion has made me commit!’ she said to him; ‘though I did modify the worst passages in the letter. . . .’

Julien’s transports of joy proved to her how completely he forgave her. Never had he been so madly in love.

‘And yet I regard myself as pious,’ Madame de Renal told him in the course of their conversation. ‘I believe sincerely in God; I believe equally, indeed it has been proved to me, that the crime I am committing is fearful, and yet, as soon as I set eyes on you, even after you have fired at me twice with a pistol . . . ‘ Here, in spite of her resistance, Julien covered her with kisses.

‘Let me alone,’ she went on, ‘I wish to argue with you, before I forget . . . As soon as I set eyes on you, all sense of duty vanishes, there is nothing left of me but love for you, or rather love is too feeble a word. I feel for you what I ought to feel only for God: a blend of respect, love, obedience . . . In truth, I do not know what feeling you inspire in me. Were you to bid me thrust a knife into your gaoler, the crime would be committed before I had had time to think. Explain this to me in simple terms before I leave you, I wish to see clearly into my own heart; for in two months we must part . . . For that matter, need we part?’ she said, with a smile.

‘I take back my word,’ cried Julien, springing to his feet; ‘I shall not appeal from the sentence of death, if by poison, knife, pistol, charcoal or any other means whatsoever, you seek to put an end to, or to endanger your life.’

Madame de Renal’s expression altered suddenly; the warmest affection gave place to a profound abstraction.

‘If we were to die at once?’ she said to him at length.

‘Who knows what we shall find in our next life?’ replied Julien; ‘torments perhaps, perhaps nothing at all. Can we not spend two months together in a delicious manner? Two months, that is ever so many days. Never shall I have been so happy.’

‘You will never have been so happy?’

‘Never,’ replied Julien with rapture, ‘and I am speaking to you as I speak to myself. Heaven preserve me from exaggeration.’

‘To speak so is to command me,’ she said with a timid and melancholy smile.

‘Very well! You swear, by the love that you bear me, not to attempt your life by any direct means, or indirect means . . . Remember,’ he added, ‘that you are compelled to live for my son, whom Mathilde will abandon to the care of servants as soon as she is Marquise de Croisenois.’

‘I swear,’ she replied coldly, ‘but I mean to take away with me your appeal written and signed by your hand. I shall go myself to the Attorney–General.’

‘Take care, you will compromise yourself.’

‘After coming publicly to see you in prison, I am for ever, for Besancon and the whole of the Franche–Comte, a heroine of anecdotes,’ she said with an air of profound distress. ‘I have gone beyond the last limits of modesty . . . I am a woman who has forfeited her honour; it is true that it was for your sake . . .’

Her tone was so melancholy that Julien embraced her with a happiness that was quite new to him. It was no longer the intoxication of love, it was extreme gratitude. He had just realised, for the first time, the full extent of the sacrifice that she had made for him.

Some charitable soul doubtless informed M. de Renal of the long visits which his wife was paying to Julien’s prison; for, after three days, he sent his carriage for her, with express orders that she was to return immediately to Verrieres.

This cruel parting had begun the day ill for Julien. He was informed, two or three hours later, that a certain intriguing priest, who for all that had not succeeded in making any headway among the Jesuits of Besancon, had taken his stand that morning outside the gate of the prison, in the street. It was raining hard, and outside there the man was trying to pose as a martyr. Julien was out of temper, this piece of foolishness moved him profoundly.

That morning he had already refused a visit from the priest, but the man had made up his mind to hear Julien’s confession, and to make a name for himself among the young women of Besancon, on the strength of all the confidences which he would pretend to have received.

He declared in a loud voice that he was going to remain day and night at the gate of the prison: ‘God has sent me to touch the heart of this other apostate.’ And the lower orders, always curious spectators of a scene, began to assemble in crowds.

‘Yes, my brethren,’ he said to them, ‘I shall spend the day here, and the night, and every day and night from now onwards. The Holy Spirit has spoken to me. I have a mission from on high; it is I that am to save the soul of young Sorel. Join with me in my prayers,’ etc., etc.

Julien had a horror of scandal, and of anything that might attract attention to himself. He thought of seizing the opportunity to escape from the world unknown; but he had still some hope of seeing Madame de Renal again, and was desperately in love.

The gate of the prison was situated in one of the most frequented streets. The thought of that mud-bespattered priest, drawing a crowd and creating a scandal, was torture to his soul. ‘And, without a doubt, at every instant he is repeating my name!’ This moment was more painful than death itself.

He called two or three times, at intervals of an hour, for a turnkey who was devoted to him, to send him out to see whether the priest were still at the gate of the prison.

‘Sir, he is on both his knees in the mud,’ was the turnkey’s invariable answer; ‘he is praying aloud, and repeating Litanies for your soul.’ ‘The impertinent fellow!’ thought Julien. At that moment, indeed, he heard a dull roar, it was the crowd responding to the Litany. To increase his impatience, he saw the turnkey move his lips as he repeated the Latin words. ‘They are beginning to say,’ the turnkey added, ‘that your heart must indeed be hardened if you refuse the succour of this holy man.’

‘O my country! How barbarous you still are!’ cried Julien in a frenzy of rage. And he continued his reasoning aloud, without a thought of the turnkey’s presence.

‘The man wants an article in the paper, and now he is certain of obtaining it.

‘Oh, cursed provincials! In Paris, I should not have been subjected to all these vexations. They are more adept there in charlatanism.

‘Let this holy priest come in,’ he said at length to the turnkey, and the sweat trickled in great drops from his brow. The turnkey made the sign of the Cross, and left the cell radiant.

The holy priest proved to be hideously ugly, and was even more foul with mud. The cold rain outside intensified the darkness and dampness of the cell. The priest tried to embrace Julien, and began to show emotion as he spoke to him. The vilest hypocrisy was all too evident; never in his life had Julien been in such a rage.

A quarter of an hour after the priest had entered, Julien found himself a complete coward. For the first time death appeared to him horrible. He thought of the state of putrefaction in which his body would be two days after his execution, etc., etc.

He was on the point of betraying himself by some sign of weakness, or of flinging himself upon the priest and strangling him with his chain, when it occurred to him to beg the holy man to go and say a good forty-franc mass for him, that very day.

As it was almost midday, the priest decamped.

Chapter 44

The Shadow of the Guillotine

As soon as he had gone, Julien began to weep copiously, at the thought of dying. After a while he said to himself that, if Madame de Renal had been at Besancon, he would have confessed his weakness to her. . . .

At the moment when he most regretted the absence of that beloved woman, he heard Mathilde's step.

'The worst drawback of a prison,' he thought, 'is that one can never close one's door.' All that Mathilde had to say served only to irritate him.

She informed him that, on the day of the trial, M. de Valenod, having in his pocket his appointment as Prefect, had ventured to defy M. de Frilair and indulge himself in the pleasure of condemning Julien to death.

'"Whatever induced your friend," M. de Frilair said to me just now, "to go and arouse and attack the petty vanity of that middle-class aristocracy? Why speak of caste? He showed them what they ought to do in their own political interest: the fools had never thought of it, and were ready to cry. This caste interest blinded their eyes to the horror of condemning a man to death. You must admit that M. Sorel shows great inexperience. If we do not succeed in saving him by an appeal to clemency, his death will be a sort of suicide . . . "'

Mathilde did not, of course, mention to Julien a thing which she herself did not yet suspect; namely, that the Abbe de Frilair, seeing Julien irremediably lost, thought that it would serve his own ambition to aspire to become his successor.

Almost out of his mind with helpless rage and vexation: ‘Go and hear a mass for me,’ he said to Mathilde, ‘and leave me a moment’s peace.’ Mathilde, who was extremely jealous already at Madame de Renal’s visits and had just heard of her departure, realised the cause of Julien’s ill humour and burst into tears.

Her grief was genuine, Julien saw this and was all the more irritated. He felt a compelling need of solitude, and how was he to secure it?

Finally Mathilde, having tried every argument to soften him, left him to himself, but almost at that moment Fouque appeared.

‘I want to be alone,’ he said to this faithful friend. And, as he saw him hesitate: ‘I am composing a memorial for my appeal to clemency . . . but anyhow . . . do me a favour, never to speak to me of death. If I want any special services on the day, let me be the first to mention them.’

When Julien had at length secured solitude, he found himself more crushed and more of a coward than before. What little strength remained to his enfeebled spirit had been used up in the effort to conceal his condition from Mademoiselle de La Mole and Fouque.

Towards evening, a comforting thought came to him:

‘If this morning, at the moment when death seemed so ugly, I had been warned to prepare for execution, the eye of the public would have been the incentive to glory; my gait might perhaps have been a little heavy, like that of a timid fop on entering a drawing-room. A few perspicacious people, if there be any such among these provincials, might have guessed my weakness . . . but no one would have seen it.’

And he felt himself relieved of part of his load of misery. ‘I am a coward at this moment,’ he chanted to himself, ‘but no one will know of it.’

An almost more disagreeable incident was in store for him on the morrow. For a long time past, his father had been threatening a visit; that morning, before Julien was awake, the white-haired old carpenter appeared in his cell.

Julien felt utterly weak, he expected the most unpleasant reproaches. To complete his painful sensation, that morning he felt a keen remorse at not loving his father.

‘Chance has placed us together on this earth,’ he said to himself while the turnkey was making the cell a little tidy, ‘and we have done one another almost all the harm imaginable. He comes in the hour of my death to deal me his final blow.’

The old man’s severe reproaches began as soon as they were left without a witness.

Julien could not restrain his tears. ‘What unworthy weakness!’ he said to himself angrily. ‘He will go about everywhere exaggerating my want of courage; what a triumph for Valenod and for all the dull hypocrites who reign at Verrieres! They are very great people in France, they combine all the social advantages. Until now I could at least say to myself: They receive money, it is true, all the honours are heaped upon them, but I have nobility at heart.

‘And here is a witness whom they will all believe, and who will assure the whole of Verrieres, exaggerating the facts, that I have been weak in the face of death! I shall be said to have turned coward in this trial which they can all understand!’

Julien was almost in despair. He did not know how to get rid of his father. And to make-believe in such a way as to deceive this sharp-witted old man was, for the moment, utterly beyond his power.

His mind ran swiftly over all the possible ways of escape. ‘I have saved money!’ he exclaimed suddenly.

This inspired utterance altered the old man’s expression and Julien’s own position.

‘How ought I to dispose of it?’ he continued, with more calm: the effect produced by his words had rid him of all sense of inferiority.

The old carpenter was burning with a desire not to allow any of this money to escape, a part of which Julien seemed to wish to leave to his brothers. He spoke at great length and with heat. Julien managed to tease him.

‘Well, the Lord has given me inspiration for making my testament. I shall give a thousand francs to each of my brothers, and the remainder to you.’

‘Very good,’ said the old man, ‘that remainder is my due; but since God has been graciously pleased to touch your heart, if you wish to die like a good Christian, you ought first to pay your debts. There is still the cost of your maintenance and education, which I advanced, and which you have forgotten . . .’

‘So that is a father’s love!’ Julien repeated to himself with despair in his heart, when at length he was alone. Soon the gaoler appeared.

‘Sir, after a visit from the family, I always bring my lodgers a bottle of good champagne. It is a trifle dear, six francs the bottle, but it rejoices the heart.’

‘Bring three glasses,’ Julien told him with boyish glee, ‘and send in two of the prisoners whom I hear walking in the corridor.’

The gaoler brought him in two gaolbirds who had repeated their offence and were waiting to be sent back to penal servitude. They were a merry pair of scoundrels and really quite remarkable for cunning, courage and coolness.

‘If you give me twenty francs,’ one of them said to Julien, ‘I will tell you the whole story of my life. It is as good as a play.’

‘But you will tell me lies?’ said Julien.

‘Not at all,’ was the answer; ‘my friend here, who wants my twenty francs, will give me away if I don’t tell the truth.’

His history was abominable. It revealed a courageous heart, in which there survived but a single passion, the lust for money.

After they had left him, Julien was no longer the same man. All his anger with himself had vanished. The piercing grief, envenomed by cowardice, to

which he had been a prey since the departure of Madame de Renal, had turned to melancholy.

‘If I had only been less taken in by appearance,’ he told himself, ‘I should have seen that the drawing-rooms of Paris are inhabited by honest people like my father, or by able rascals like these gaolbirds. They are right, the men in the drawing-rooms never rise in the morning with that poignant thought: “How am I to dine today?” And they boast of their probity! And, when summoned to a jury, they proudly condemn the man who has stolen a silver fork because he felt faint with hunger!

‘But when there is a Court, when it is a question of securing or losing a Portfolio, my honest men of the drawing-rooms fall into crimes precisely similar to those which the want of food has inspired in this pair of gaolbirds . . .

‘There is no such thing as natural law: the expression is merely a hoary piece of stupidity well worthy of the Advocate–General who hunted me down the other day, and whose ancestor was made rich by one of Louis XIV’s confiscations. There is no law, save when there is a statute to prevent one from doing something, on pain of punishment. Before the statute, there is nothing natural save the strength of the lion, or the wants of the creature who suffers from hunger, or cold; in a word, necessity . . . No, the men whom we honour are merely rascals who have had the good fortune not to be caught red-handed. The accuser whom society sets at my heels has been made rich by a scandalous injustice . . . I have committed a murderous assault, and I am rightly condemned, but, short of murder only, the Valenod who condemned me is a hundred times more injurious to society.

‘Ah, well,’ Julien added sorrowfully, but without anger, ‘for all his avarice, my father is worth more than any of those men. He has never loved me. I am now going to fill his cup to overflowing, in dishonouring him by a shameful death. That fear of being in want of money, that exaggerated view of the wickedness of mankind which we call avarice, makes him see a prodigious source of consolation and security in a sum of three or four hundred louis which I may leave to him. On Sunday afternoons he will display his gold to all his envious neighbours in Verrieres. “To this tune,” his glance will say to them, “which of you would not be charmed to have a son guillotined?”’

This philosophy might be true, but it was of a nature to make a man long for death. In this way passed five endless days. He was polite and gentle to Mathilde, whom he saw to be exasperated by the most violent jealousy. One evening Julien thought seriously of taking his life. His spirit was exhausted by the profound dejection into which the departure of Madame de Renal had cast him. Nothing pleased him any more, either in real life or in imagination. Want of exercise was beginning to affect his health and to give him the weak and excitable character of a young German student. He was losing that manly pride which repels with a forcible oath certain degrading ideas by which the miserable are assailed.

'I have loved the Truth . . . Where is it to be found? . . . Everywhere hypocrisy, or at least charlatanism, even among the most virtuous, even among the greatest'; and his lips curled in disgust . . . 'No, man cannot place any trust in man.

'Madame de —— , when she was making a collection for her poor orphans, told me that some Prince had just given her ten louis; a lie. But what am I saying? Napoleon at Saint–Helena! . . . Pure charlatanism, a proclamation in favour of the King of Rome.

'Great God! If such a man as he, at a time, too, when misfortune ought to recall him sternly to a sense of duty, stoops to charlatanism, what is one to expect of the rest of the species?

'Where is Truth? In religion . . . Yes,' he added with a bitter smile of the most intense scorn, 'in the mouths of the Maslons, the Frilairs, the Castanedes . . . Perhaps in true Christianity, whose priests would be no more paid than were the Apostles? But Saint Paul was paid with the pleasure of commanding, of speaking, of hearing himself spoken of . . .

'Ah! If there were a true religion . . . Idiot that I am! I see a gothic cathedral, storied windows; my feeble heart imagines the priest from those windows . . . My soul would understand him, my soul has need of him. I find only a fop with greasy hair . .. little different, in fact, from the Chevalier de Beauvoisis.

‘But a true priest, a Massillon, a Fenelon. . . . Massillon consecrated Dubois. The Memoires de Saint–Simon have spoiled Fenelon for me; but still, a true priest . . . Then the tender hearts would have a meeting-place in this world . . . We should not remain isolated . . . This good priest would speak to us of God. But what God? Not the God of the Bible, a petty despot, cruel and filled with a thirst for vengeance . . . but the God of Voltaire, just, good, infinite . . .’

He was disturbed by all his memories of that Bible which he knew by heart . . . ‘But how, whenever three are gathered together, how is one to believe in that great name of GOD, after the frightful abuse that our priests make of it?

‘To live in isolation! . . . What torture! . . .

‘I am becoming foolish and unjust,’ said Julien, beating his brow. ‘I am isolated here in this cell; but I have not lived in isolation on this earth; I had always the compelling idea of duty. The duty that I had laid down for myself, rightly or wrongly, was like the trunk of a strong tree against which I leaned during the storm; I tottered, I was shaken. After all, I was only a man . . . but I was not carried away.

‘It is the damp air of this cell that makes me think of isolation . . .

‘And why be a hypocrite still when I am cursing hypocrisy? It is not death, nor the cell, nor the damp air, it is the absence of Madame de Renal that is crushing me. If I were at Verrieres, and, in order to see her, were obliged to live for weeks on end hidden in the cellars of her house, should I complain?

‘The influence of my contemporaries is too strong for me,’ he said aloud and with a bitter laugh. ‘Talking alone to myself, within an inch of death, I am still a hypocrite . . . Oh, nineteenth century!

‘A hunter fires his gun in a forest, his quarry falls, he runs forward to seize it. His boot strikes an anthill two feet high, destroys the habitation of the ants, scatters the ants and their eggs to the four winds . . . The most philosophical among the ants will never understand that black, enormous, fearful body — the hunter’s boot which all of a sudden has burst into their

dwelling with incredible speed, preceded by a terrifying noise, accompanied by a flash of reddish flame . . .

‘So it is with death, life, eternity, things that would be quite simple to anyone who had organs vast enough to conceive them . . .

‘An ephemeral fly is born at nine o’clock in the morning, on one of the long days of summer, to die at five o’clock in the afternoon; how should it understand the word night?

‘Grant it five hours more of existence, it sees and understands what night is.

‘And so with myself, I am to die at three and twenty. Grant me five years more of life, to live with Madame de Renal.’

Here he gave a satanic laugh. What folly to discuss these great problems!

‘Imprimis: I am a hypocrite just as much as if there was someone in the cell to hear me.

‘Item: I am forgetting to live and love, when I have so few days left of life . . . Alas! Madame de Renal is absent; perhaps her husband will not allow her to come to Besancon again, and disgrace herself further.

‘That is what is isolating me, that and not the absence of a just, good, all-powerful God, who is not wicked, not hungry for vengeance . . .

‘Ah! If He existed . . . Alas! I should fall at His feet. I have deserved death, I should say to him; but, great God, good God, indulgent God, restore to me her whom I love!’

The night was by now far advanced. After an hour or two of peaceful slumber, Fouque arrived.

Julien felt himself to be strong and resolute like a man who sees clearly into his own heart.

Chapter 45

Exit Julien

‘I will not play that poor abbe Chas–Bernard the unkind trick of sending for him,’ he said to Fouque; ‘he would not be able to eat his dinner for three days afterwards. But try to find me a Jansenist, a friend of M. Pirard and beyond the reach of intrigue.’

Fouque had been awaiting this development with impatience. Julien acquitted himself in a decent fashion of everything that is due to public opinion in the provinces. Thanks to M. l’abbe de Frilair, and in spite of his unfortunate choice of a confessor, Julien, in his cell, was under the protection of the Congregation; with a little more of the spirit of action, he might have made his escape. But, as the bad air of the cell produced its effect, his mental powers dwindled. This made him all the happier on the return of Madame de Renal.

‘My first duty is towards you,’ she said to him as she embraced him; ‘I have fled from Verrieres . . .’

Julien had no petty vanity in his relations with her, he told her of all his weak moments. She was kind and charming to him.

That evening, immediately upon leaving the prison, she summoned to her aunt’s house the priest who had attached himself to Julien as to a prey; as he wished only to acquire a reputation among the young women belonging to the best society of Besancon, Madame de Renal easily persuaded him to go and offer a novena at the abbey of Bray-le-Haut.

No words could express the intensity and recklessness of Julien’s love.

By spending money freely, and by using and abusing the reputation of her aunt, well known for her piety and riches, Madame de Renal obtained permission to see him twice daily.

On hearing this, Mathilde's jealousy rose to the pitch of insanity. M. de Frilair had assured her that in spite of his position he dared not flout all the conventions so far as to permit her to see her friend more than once daily. Mathilde had Madame de Renal followed, so as to be kept informed of her most trivial actions. M. de Frilair exhausted every resource of a most cunning mind, in trying to prove to her that Julien was unworthy of her.

In the midst of all these torments, she loved him all the more, and, almost every day, created a horrible scene in his cell.

Julien wished at all costs to behave like an honourable man until the end towards this poor girl whom he had so seriously compromised; but, at every moment, the unbridled passion that he felt for Madame de Renal overcame him. When, through some flaw in his argument, he failed to convince Mathilde of the innocence of her rival's visits: 'At this stage, the end of the play must be very near,' he said to himself; 'that is some excuse for me if I cannot act better.'

Mademoiselle de La Mole learned of the death of M. de Croisenois. M. de Thaler, that man of boundless wealth, had taken the liberty of saying unpleasant things about Mathilde's disappearance; M. de Croisenois called on him with a request that he would withdraw them: M. de Thaler showed him certain anonymous letters addressed to himself, and full of details so skilfully put together that it was impossible for the poor Marquis not to discern the true facts.

M. de Thaler indulged in pleasantries that were distinctly broad. Mad with rage and misery, M. de Croisenois insisted upon reparations so drastic that the millionaire preferred a duel. Folly proved triumphant; and one of the men in Paris most worthy of a woman's love met his death in his twenty-fourth year.

This death made a strange and morbid impression on Julien's weakened spirits.

‘Poor Croisenois,’ he said to Mathilde, ‘did really behave quite reasonably and honourably towards us; he had every right to hate me after your imprudent behaviour in your mother’s drawing-room, and to seek a quarrel with me; for the hatred that follows on contempt is generally furious.’

The death of M. de Croisenois altered all Julien’s ideas with regard to Mathilde’s future; he devoted several days to proving to her that she ought to accept the hand of M. de Luz. ‘He is a shy man, not too much of a Jesuit,’ he told her, ‘and a man who no doubt intends to climb. With a more sober and persistent ambition than poor Croisenois, and with no dukedom in his family, he will make no difficulty about marrying Julien Sorel’s widow.’

‘And a widow who scorns grand passions,’ replied Mathilde coldly; ‘for she has lived long enough to see, after six months, her lover prefer another woman, and a woman who was the origin of all their troubles.’

‘You are unjust; Madame de Renal’s visits will furnish the barrister from Paris, who has been engaged to conduct my appeal, with some striking phrases; he will describe the murderer honoured by the attentions of his victim. That may create an effect, and perhaps one day you will see me the hero of some melodrama,’ etc., etc.

A furious jealousy and one that was incapable of wreaking vengeance, the prolongation of a hopeless misery (for, even supposing Julien to be saved, how was she to recapture his heart?), the shame and grief of loving more than ever this faithless lover, had plunged Mademoiselle de La Mole in a grim silence from which the zealous attentions of M. de Frilair were no more capable than the rude frankness of Fouque, of making her emerge.

As for Julien, except during the moments usurped by the presence of Mathilde, he was living upon love and with hardly a thought of the future. A curious effect of this passion, in its extreme form and free from all pretence, was that Madame de Renal almost shared his indifference and mild gaiety.

‘In the past,’ Julien said to her, ‘when I might have been so happy during our walks in the woods of Vergy, a burning ambition led my soul into imaginary tracts. Instead of my pressing to my heart this lovely arm which was so near to my lips, the thought of my future tore me away from you; I was occupied

with the countless battles which I should have to fight in order to build up a colossal fortune . . . No, I should have died without knowing what happiness meant, had you not come to visit me in this prison.'

Two incidents occurred to disturb this tranquil existence. Julien's confessor, for all that he was a Jansenist, was not immune from an intrigue by the Jesuits, and quite unawares became their instrument.

He came one day to inform him that if he were not to fall into the mortal sin of suicide, he must take every possible step to obtain a reprieve. Now, the clergy having considerable influence at the Ministry of Justice in Paris, an easy method offered itself: he must undergo a sensational conversion . . .

'Sensational!' Julien repeated. 'Ah! I have caught you at the same game, Father, play-acting like any missionary . . .'

'Your tender age,' the Jansenist went or gravely, 'the interesting appearance with which Providence has blessed you, the motive itself of your crime, which remains inexplicable, the heroic measures of which Mademoiselle de La Mole is unsparing on your behalf, everything, in short, including the astonishing affection that your victim shows for you, all these have combined to make you the hero of the young women of Besancon. They have forgotten everything for you, even politics . . .

'Your conversion would strike an echo in their hearts, and would leave a profound impression there. You can be of the greatest service to religion, and am I to hesitate for the frivolous reason that the Jesuits would adopt the same course in similar circumstances! And so, even in this particular case which has escaped their rapacity, they would still be doing harm! Let such a thing never be said . . . The tears which will flow at your conversion will annul the corrosive effect of ten editions of the impious works of Voltaire.'

'And what shall I have left,' replied Julien coldly, 'if I despise myself? I have been ambitious, I have no wish to reproach myself; I acted then according to the expediency of the moment. Now, I am living from day to day. But, generally speaking, I should be making myself extremely unhappy, if I gave way to any cowardly temptation . . .'

The other incident, which affected Julien far more keenly, arose from Madame de Renal. Some intriguing friend or other had managed to persuade this simple, timid soul that it was her duty to go to Saint–Cloud, and to throw herself at the feet of King Charles X.

She had made the sacrifice of parting from Julien, and after such an effort, the unpleasantness of making a public spectacle of herself, which at any other time would have seemed to her worse than death, was no longer anything in her eyes.

‘I shall go to the King, I shall confess proudly that you are my lover: the life of a man, and of such a man as Julien, must outweigh all other considerations. I shall say that it was out of jealousy that you attempted my life. There are endless examples of poor young men who have been saved in such cases by the humanity of a jury, or by that of the King . . .’

‘I shall cease to see you, I shall bar the door of my prison against you,’ cried Julien, ‘and most certainly I shall kill myself in despair, the day after, unless you swear to me that you will take no step that will make us both a public spectacle. This idea of going to Paris is not yours. Tell me the name of the intriguing woman who suggested it to you .. .

‘Let us be happy throughout the few remaining days of this brief life. Let us conceal our existence; my crime is only too plain. Mademoiselle de La Mole has unbounded influence in Paris, you may be sure that she is doing all that is humanly possible. Here in the provinces, I have all the wealthy and respectable people against me. Your action would embitter still further these wealthy and above all moderate men, for whom life is such an easy matter . . . Let us not give food for laughter to the Maslons, the Valenods, and a thousand people better worth than they.’

The bad air of the cell became insupportable to Julien. Fortunately on the day on which he was told that he must die, a bright sun was gladdening the earth, and he himself was in a courageous mood. To walk in the open air was a delicious sensation to him, as is treading solid earth to A mariner who has long been at sea. ‘There, all is well,’ he said to himself, ‘I am not lacking in courage.’

Never had that head been so poetic as at the moment when it was about to fall. The most precious moments that he had known in the past in the woods of Vergy came crowding into his mind with an extreme vividness.

Everything passed simply, decorously, and without affectation on his part.

Two days earlier, he had said to Fouque: ‘For my emotions I cannot answer; this damp and hideous cell gives me moments of fever in which I am not myself; but fear, no; no one shall see me blench.’

He had made arrangements in advance that on the morning of the last day, Fouque should carry off Mathilde and Madame de Renal.

‘Take them in the same carriage,’ he had told him. ‘Arrange that the post-horses shall gallop all the time. They will fall into one another’s arms, or else will show a deadly hatred for one another. In either case, the poor women will have some slight distraction from their terrible grief.’

Julien had made Madame de Renal swear that she would live to look after Mathilde’s child.

‘Who knows? Perhaps we continue to have sensation after our death,’ he said one day to Fouque. ‘I should dearly like to repose, since repose is the word, in that little cave in the high mountain that overlooks Verrieres. Many a time, as I have told you, retiring by night to that cave, and casting my gaze afar over the richest provinces of France, I have felt my heart ablaze with ambition: it was my passion then . . . Anyhow, that cave is precious to me, and no one can deny that it is situated in a spot that a philosopher’s heart might envy . . . Very well! These worthy members of the Congregation of Besancon make money out of everything; if you know how to set about it, they will sell you my mortal remains . . .’

Fouque was successful in this grim transaction. He was spending the night alone in his room, by the body of his friend, when to his great surprise, he saw Mathilde appear. A few hours earlier, he had left her ten leagues from Besancon. There was a wild look in her eyes.

‘I wish to see him,’ she said to him.

Fouque had not the courage to speak or to rise. He pointed with his finger to a great blue cloak on the floor; in it was wrapped all that remained of Julien.

She fell upon her knees. The memory of Boniface de La Mole and of Marguerite de Navarre gave her, no doubt, a superhuman courage. Her trembling hands unfolded the cloak. Fouque turned away his eyes.

He heard Mathilde walking rapidly about the room. She lighted a number of candles. When Fouque had summoned up the strength to look at her, she had placed Julien's head upon a little marble table, in front of her, and was kissing his brow . . .

Mathilde followed her lover to the tomb which he had chosen for himself. A great number of priests escorted the coffin and, unknown to all, alone in her draped carriage, she carried upon her knees the head of the man whom she had so dearly loved.

Coming thus near to the summit of one of the high mountains of the Jura, in the middle of the night, in that little cave magnificently illuminated with countless candles, a score of priests celebrated the Office of the Dead. All the inhabitants of the little mountain villages, through which the procession passed, had followed it, drawn by the singularity of this strange ceremony.

Mathilde appeared in their midst in a flowing garb of mourning, and, at the end of the service, had several thousands of five franc pieces scattered among them.

Left alone with Fouque, she insisted upon burying her lover's head with her own hands. Fouque almost went mad with grief.

By Mathilde's orders, this savage grot was adorned with marbles sculptured at great cost, in Italy.

Madame de Renal was faithful to her promise. She did not seek in any way to take her own life; but, three days after Julien, died while embracing her children.

TO THE HAPPY FEW

The drawback of the reign of opinion, which however procures liberty, is that it interferes in matters with which it has no concern; such as private life. Hence the gloom of America and England. To avoid touching upon private life, the author has invented a small town, Verrieres, and when he required a Bishop, a jury, an Assize Court, has placed them all in Besancon, where he has never been.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This translation has been made from the text of Le Rouge et le Noir, Chronique du XIXe Siecle texte etabli et annote avec une preface et une bibliographie par Henri Martineau. . . . Editions Bossard, 140 Boulevard Saint–Germain, 140, Paris, 1925. This is a reprint of the first edition; the footnotes, giving the corrections and alterations afterwards made in manuscript by Beyle himself, have been incorporated in the text of the translation, the proofs of which have also been collected with the text edited by M. Jules Marsan and published by M. Edourard Champion.

Le Rouge et le Noir was first published by A. Levavasseur, Paris, in 1831, in two volumes octavo, and was reprinted in the same year in six volumes 16mo. It has been many times reprinted by different publishers, among the principal editions being the one issued by Alphonse Lemerre in 1886, with a preface by Paul Bourget, and Le Rouge et le Noir, texte etabli et annote avec une introduction historique par Jules Marsan, Preface de Paul Bourget, de l'Academie Francaise Paris, Libraire ancienne Honore Champion, Edouard Champion . . . 5, Quai Malaquais, vie, 1923, 2 vol. in8. This last forms part of the complete and definitive edition in 35 volumes, the first of which appeared in 1912.

C. K. S. M.

THE CHARTERHOUSE OF PARMA

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

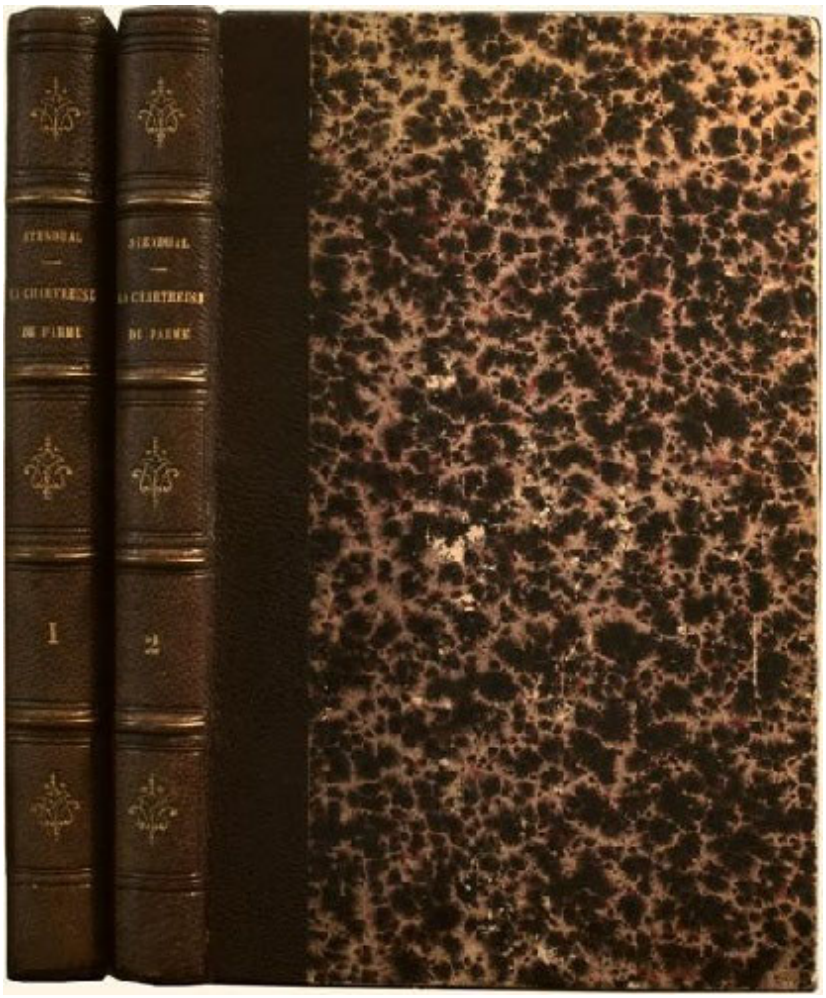
Stendhal's third and final finished novel was published in 1839 and chronicles the adventures of Fabrice del Dongo, from the birth of the Italian nobleman in 1798 until his death. Fabrice spends his early years in his family's castle on Lake Como, while the rest of the novel is set in a fictionalised Parma.

The novel begins with the French army sweeping into Milan and stirring up the sleepy region of Lombardy, which was allied with Austria. Fabrice grows up surrounded by intrigues and alliances for and against the French. His father, the Marchese, comically believes himself to be a spy for the Viennese. The novel's early section describes Fabrice's naive efforts to join Napoleon when the Emperor returns to France in March, 1815. Leaving his home on Lake Como to travel north with false papers, he wanders through France, losing money and horses rapidly. On his way, he is imprisoned as a spy, but escapes, donning the uniform of a dead French hussar. In his excitement to play the role of a French soldier, he wanders onto the field at the Battle of Waterloo.

Being himself one of the survivors of the retreat from Moscow in 1812 and a veteran of several Napoleonic campaigns, Stendhal describes the famous Battle of Waterloo as a chaotic affair, with soldiers galloping one way and then another, as bullets 'plow the fields around them'. Fabrice briefly joins the guard of Field Marshal Ney, where he shoots one Prussian cavalryman, while he and his regiment flee and he is lucky to survive the fighting with a wound to his leg. He makes his way back to his family's castle, injured, penniless and still wondering whether he truly took part in the battle.

Towards the end of the novel, he is ironically regarded as one of Napoleon's bravest captains or colonels.

Although in many respects The Charterhouse of Parma is a romantic thriller, teeming with intrigue and adventures, the novel is also an exploration of human nature, psychology and understanding of complex court politics. The novel is now cited as an early example of realism, offering a stark contrast to the Romantic style popular at the time Stendhal was writing. The novel was considered by many authors to be a truly revolutionary work, with Honoré de Balzac judging The Charterhouse of Parma to be the most significant novel of their era, while Tolstoy was heavily influenced by Stendhal's treatment of the Battle of Waterloo and the Russian's interpretation of the Battle of Borodino in War and Peace is heavily indebted to the earlier writing of the Frenchman.



The first edition

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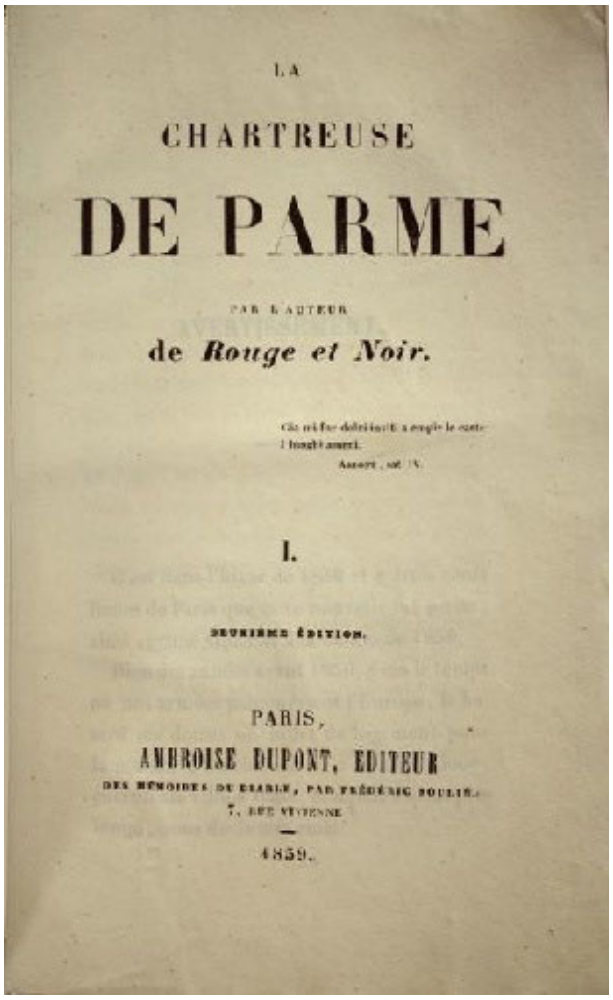


LA

CHARTREUSE

DE PARME

PAR L'AUTEUR

de *Rouge et Noir.*

I.

DEUXIÈME ÉDITION.

PARIS,

AMBROISE DUPONT, ÉDITEUR

1839.

The original title page

PREFACE

To the Reader

It was in the winter of 1830 and three hundred leagues from Paris that this tale was written; thus it contains no allusion to the events of 1839.

Many years before 1830, at the time when our Armies were overrunning Europe, chance put me in possession of a billeting order on the house of a Canon: this was at Padua, a charming town in Italy; my stay being prolonged, we became friends.

Passing through Padua again towards the end of 1830, I hastened to the house of the good Canon: he himself was dead, that I knew, but I wished to see once again the room in which we had passed so many pleasant evenings, evenings on which I had often looked back since. I found there the Canon's nephew and his wife who welcomed me like an old friend. Several people came in, and we did not break up until a very late hour; the nephew sent out to the Caffè Pedrocchi for an excellent zabaione. What more than anything kept us up was the story of the Duchessa Sanseverina, to which someone made an allusion, and which the nephew was good enough to relate from beginning to end, in my honour.

"In the place to which I am going," I told my friends, "I am not likely to find evenings like this, and, to while away the long hours of darkness, I shall make a novel out of your story."

"In that case," said the nephew, "let me give you my uncle's journal, which, under the heading Parma, mentions several of the intrigues of that court, in the days when the Duchessa's word was law there; but, have a care! this story is anything but moral, and now that you pride yourselves in France on your gospel purity, it may win you the reputation of an assassin."

I publish this tale without any alteration from the manuscript of 1830, a course which may have two drawbacks:

The first for the reader: the characters being Italians will perhaps interest him less, hearts in that country differing considerably from hearts in France: the Italians are sincere, honest folk and, not taking offence, say what is in their minds; it is only when the mood seizes them that they shew any vanity; which then becomes passion, and goes by the name of puntiglio. Lastly, poverty is not, with them, a subject for ridicule.

The second drawback concerns the author.

I confess that I have been so bold as to leave my characters with their natural asperities; but, on the other hand — this I proclaim aloud — I heap the most moral censure upon many of their actions. To what purpose should I give them the exalted morality and other graces of French characters, who love money above all things, and sin scarcely ever from motives of hatred or love? The Italians in this tale are almost the opposite. Besides, it seems to me that, whenever one takes a stride of two hundred leagues from South to North, the change of scene that occurs is tantamount to a fresh tale. The Canon’s charming niece had known and indeed had been greatly devoted to the Duchessa Sanseverina, and begs me to alter nothing in her adventures, which are reprehensible.

23rd January, 1839.

CHAPTER ONE

On the 15th of May, 1796, General Bonaparte made his entry into Milan at the head of that young army which had shortly before crossed the Bridge of Lodi and taught the world that after all these centuries Caesar and Alexander had a successor. The miracles of gallantry and genius of which Italy was a witness in the space of a few months aroused a slumbering people; only a week before the arrival of the French, the Milanese still regarded them as a mere rabble of brigands, accustomed invariably to flee before the troops of His Imperial and Royal Majesty; so much at least was reported to them three times weekly by a little news-sheet no bigger than one's hand, and printed on soiled paper.

In the Middle Ages the Republicans of Lombardy had given proof of a valour equal to that of the French, and deserved to see their city razed to the ground by the German Emperors. Since they had become loyal subjects, their great occupation was the printing of sonnets upon handkerchiefs of rose-coloured taffeta whenever the marriage occurred of a young lady belonging to some rich or noble family. Two or three years after that great event in her life, the young lady in question used to engage a devoted admirer: sometimes the name of the cicisbeo chosen by the husband's family occupied an honourable place in the marriage contract. It was a far cry from these effeminate ways to the profound emotions aroused by the unexpected arrival of the French army. Presently there sprang up a new and passionate way of life. A whole people discovered, on the 15th of May, 1796, that everything which until then it had respected was supremely ridiculous, if not actually hateful. The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the collapse of the old ideas: to risk one's life became the fashion. People saw that in order to be really happy after centuries of cloying sensations, it was necessary to love one's country with a real love and to seek out heroic actions. They had been plunged in the darkest night by the continuation of the jealous despotism of Charles V and Philip II; they overturned these monarchs' statues and immediately found themselves flooded with daylight. For the last half-century, as the Encyclopaedia and Voltaire gained ground in France, the monks had been dinning into the ears of the good people of

Milan that to learn to read, or for that matter to learn anything at all was a great waste of labour, and that by paying one's exact tithe to one's parish priest and faithfully reporting to him all one's little misdeeds, one was practically certain of having a good place in Paradise. To complete the debilitation of this people once so formidable and so rational, Austria had sold them, on easy terms, the privilege of not having to furnish any recruits to her army.

In 1796, the Milanese army was composed of four and twenty rapscallions dressed in scarlet, who guarded the town with the assistance of four magnificent regiments of Hungarian Grenadiers. Freedom of morals was extreme, but passion very rare; otherwise, apart from the inconvenience of having to repeat everything to one's parish priest, on pain of ruin even in this world, the good people of Milan were still subjected to certain little monarchical interferences which could not fail to be vexatious. For instance, the Archduke, who resided at Milan and governed in the name of the Emperor, his cousin, had had the lucrative idea of trading in corn. In consequence, an order prohibiting the peasants from selling their grain until His Highness had filled his granaries.

In May, 1796, three days after the entry of the French, a young painter in miniature, slightly mad, named Gros, afterwards famous, who had come with the army, overhearing in the great Caffè dei Servi (which was then in fashion) an account of the exploits of the Archduke, who moreover was extremely stout, picked up the list of ices which was printed on a sheet of coarse yellow paper. On the back of this he drew the fat Archduke; a French soldier was stabbing him with his bayonet in the stomach, and instead of blood there gushed out an incredible quantity of corn. What we call a lampoon or caricature was unknown in this land of crafty 'despotism. The drawing, left by Gros on the table of the Caffè dei Servi, seemed a miracle fallen from heaven; it was engraved and printed during the night, and next day twenty thousand copies of it were sold.

The same day, there were posted up notices of a forced loan of six millions, levied to supply the needs of the French army which, having just won six battles and conquered a score of provinces, wanted nothing now but shoes, breeches, jackets and caps.

The mass of prosperity and pleasure which burst into Lombardy in the wake of these French ragamuffins was so great that only the priests and a few nobles were conscious of the burden of this levy of six millions, shortly to be followed by a number of others. These French soldiers laughed and sang all day long; they were all under twenty-five years of age, and their Commander in Chief, who had reached twenty-seven, was reckoned the oldest man in his army. This gaiety, this youthfulness, this irresponsibility furnished a jocular reply to the furious preachings of the monks, who, for six months, had been announcing from the pulpit that the French were monsters, obliged, upon pain of death, to burn down everything and to cut off everyone's head. With this object, each of their regiments marched with a guillotine at its head.

In the country districts one saw at the cottage doors the French soldier engaged in dandling the housewife's baby in his arms, and almost every evening some drummer, scraping a fiddle, would improvise a ball. Our country dances proving a great deal too skilful and complicated for the soldiers, who for that matter barely knew them themselves, to be able to teach them to the women of the country, it was the latter who shewed the young Frenchmen the Monferrina, Salterello and other Italian dances.

The officers had been lodged, as far as possible, with the wealthy inhabitants; they had every need of comfort. A certain lieutenant, for instance, named Robert, received a billeting order on the palazzo of the Marchesa del Dongo. This officer, a young conscript not over-burdened with scruples, possessed as his whole worldly wealth, when he entered this palazzo, a scudo of six francs which he had received at Piacenza. After the crossing of the Bridge of Lodi he had taken from a fine Austrian officer, killed by a ball, a magnificent pair of nankeen pantaloons, quite new, and never did any garment come more opportunely. His officer's epaulettes were of wool, and the cloth of his tunic was stitched to the lining of the sleeves so that its scraps might hold together; but there was something even more distressing; the soles of his shoes were made out of pieces of soldiers' caps, likewise picked up on the field of battle, somewhere beyond the Bridge of Lodi. These makeshift soles were tied on over his shoes with pieces of string which were plainly visible, so that when the major-domo appeared at the door of Lieutenant Robert's room bringing him an invitation to dine with the Signora Marchesa, the officer was thrown into the utmost confusion. He and his orderly spent the two hours that divided him from this fatal dinner in

trying to patch up the tunic a little and in dyeing black, with ink, those wretched strings round his shoes. At last the dread moment arrived. “Never in my life did I feel more ill at ease,” Lieutenant Robert told me; “the ladies expected that I would terrify them, and I was trembling far more than they were. I looked down at my shoes and did not know how to walk gracefully. The Marchesa del Dongo,” he went on, “was then in the full bloom of her beauty: you have seen her for yourself, with those lovely eyes of an angelic sweetness, and the dusky gold of her hair which made such a perfect frame for the oval of that charming face. I had in my room a Herodias by Leonardo da Vinci, which might have been her portrait. Mercifully, I was so overcome by her supernatural beauty that I forgot all about my clothes. For the last two years I had been seeing nothing that was not ugly and wretched, in the mountains behind Genoa: I ventured to say a few words to her to express my delight.

“But I had too much sense to waste any time upon compliments. As I was turning my phrases I saw, in a dining-room built entirely of marble, a dozen flunkeys and footmen dressed in what seemed to me then the height of magnificence. Just imagine, the rascals had not only good shoes on their feet, but silver buckles as well. I could see them all, out of the corner of my eye, staring stupidly at my coat and perhaps at my shoes also, which cut me to the heart. I could have frightened all these fellows with a word; but how was I to put them in their place without running the risk of offending the ladies? For the Marchesa, to fortify her own courage a little, as she has told me a hundred times since, had sent to fetch from the convent where she was still at school Gina del Dongo, her husband’s sister, who was afterwards that charming Contessa Pietranera: no one, in prosperity, surpassed her in gaiety and sweetness of temper, just as no one surpassed her in courage and serenity of soul when fortune turned against her.

“Gina, who at that time might have been thirteen but looked more like eighteen, a lively, downright girl, as you know, was in such fear of bursting out laughing at the sight of my costume that she dared not eat; the Marchesa, on the other hand, loaded me with constrained civilities; she could see quite well the movements of impatience in my eyes. In a word, I cut a sorry figure, I chewed the bread of scorn, a thing which is said to be impossible for a Frenchman. At length, a heaven-sent idea shone in my mind: I set to work to tell the ladies of my poverty and of what we had suffered for the last two

years in the mountains behind Genoa where we were kept by idiotic old Generals. There, I told them, we were paid in assignats which were not legal tender in the country, and given three ounces of bread daily. I had not been speaking for two minutes before there were tears in the good Marchesa's eyes, and Gina had grown serious.

"'What, Lieutenant,' she broke in, 'three ounces of bread!'

"'Yes, Signorina; but to make up for that the issue ran short three days in the week, and as the peasants on whom we were billeted were even worse off than ourselves, we used to hand on some of our bread to them.'

"On leaving the table, I offered the Marchesa my arm as far as the door of the drawing-room, then hurried back and gave the servant who had waited upon me at dinner that solitary scudo of six francs upon the spending of which I had built so many castles in the air.

"A week later," Robert went on, "when it was satisfactorily established that the French were not guillotining anyone, the Marchese del Dongo returned from his castle of Grianta on the Lake of Como, to which he had gallantly retired on the approach of the army, abandoning to the fortunes of war his young and beautiful wife and his sister. The hatred that this Marchese felt for us was equal to his fear, that is to say immeasurable: his fat face, pale and pious, was an amusing spectacle when he was being polite to me. On the day after his return to Milan, I received three ells of cloth and two hundred francs out of the levy of six millions; I renewed my wardrobe, and became cavalier to the ladies, for the season of balls was beginning."

Lieutenant Robert's story was more or less that of all the French troops; instead of laughing at the wretched plight of these poor soldiers, people were sorry for them and came to love them.

This period of unlooked-for happiness and wild excitement lasted but two short years; the frenzy had been so excessive and so general that it would be impossible for me to give any idea of it, were it not for this historical and profound reflexion: these people had been living in a state of boredom for the last hundred years.

The thirst for pleasure natural in southern countries had prevailed in former times at the court of the Visconti and Sforza, those famous Dukes of Milan. But from the year 1524, when the Spaniards conquered the Milanese, and conquered them as taciturn, suspicious, arrogant masters, always in dread of revolt, gaiety had fled. The subject race, adopting the manners of their masters, thought more of avenging the least insult by a dagger-blow than of enjoying the fleeting hour.

This frenzied joy, this gaiety, this thirst for pleasure, this tendency to forget every sad or even reasonable feeling, were carried to such a pitch, between the 15th of May, 1796, when the French entered Milan, and April, 1799, when they were driven out again after the battle of Cassano, that instances have been cited of old millionaire merchants, old money-lenders, old scriveners who, during this interval, quite forgot to pull long faces and to amass money.

At the most it would have been possible to point to a few families belonging to the higher ranks of the nobility, who had retired to their palaces in the country, as though in a sullen revolt against the prevailing high spirits and the expansion of every heart. It is true that these noble and wealthy families had been given a distressing prominence in the allocation of the forced loans exacted for the French army.

The Marchese del Dongo, irritated by the spectacle of so much gaiety, had been one of the first to return to his magnificent castle of Grianta, on the farther side of Como, whither his ladies took with them Lieutenant Robert. This castle, standing in a position which is perhaps unique in the world, on a plateau one hundred and fifty feet above that sublime lake, a great part of which it commands, had been originally a fortress. The del Dongo family had constructed it in the fifteenth century, as was everywhere attested by marble tablets charged with their arms; one could still see the drawbridges and deep moats, though the latter, it must be admitted, had been drained of their water; but with its walls eighty feet in height and six in thickness, this castle was safe from assault, and it was for this reason that it was dear to the timorous Marchese. Surrounded by some twenty-five or thirty retainers whom he supposed to be devoted to his person, presumably because he never opened his mouth except to curse them, he was less tormented by fear than at Milan.

This fear was not altogether groundless: he was in most active correspondence with a spy posted by Austria on the Swiss frontier three leagues from Grianta, to contrive the escape of the prisoners taken on the field of battle; conduct which might have been viewed in a serious light by the French Generals.

The Marchese had left his young wife at Milan; she looked after the affairs of the family there, and was responsible for providing the sums levied on the casa del Dongo (as they say in Italy); she sought to have these reduced, which obliged her to visit those of the nobility who had accepted public office, and even some highly influential persons who were not of noble birth. A great event now occurred in this family. The Marchese had arranged the marriage of his young sister Gina with a personage of great wealth and the very highest birth; but he powdered his hair; in virtue of which, Ghia received him with shouts of laughter, and presently took the rash step of marrying the Conte Pietranera. He was, it is true, a very fine gentleman, of the most personable appearance, but ruined for generations past in estate, and to complete the disgrace of the match, a fervent supporter of the new ideas. Pietranera was a sub-lieutenant in the Italian Legion; this was the last straw for the Marchese.

After these two years of folly and happiness, the Directory in Paris, giving itself the ate of a sovereign firmly enthroned, began to shew a mortal hatred of everything that was not commonplace. The incompetent Generals whom it imposed on the Army of Italy lost a succession of battles on those same plains of Verona, which had witnessed two years before the prodigies of Arcole and Lonato. The Austrians again drew near to Milan; Lieutenant Robert, who had been promoted to the command of a battalion and had been wounded at the battle of Cassano, came to lodge for the last time in the house of his friend the Marchesa del Dongo. Their parting was a sad one; Robert set forth with Conte Pietranera, who followed the French in their retirement on Novi. The young Contessa, to whom her brother refused to pay her marriage portion, followed the army, riding in a cart.

Then began that period of reaction and a return to the old ideas, which the Milanese call i tredici mesi (the thirteen months), because as it turned out their destiny willed that this return to stupidity should endure for thirteen months only, until Marengo. Everyone who was old, bigoted, morose,

reappeared at the head of affairs, and resumed the leadership of society; presently the people who had remained faithful to the sound doctrines published a report in the villages that Napoleon had been hanged by the Mamelukes in Egypt, as he so richly deserved.

Among these men who had retired to sulk on their estates and came back now athirst for vengeance, the Marchese del Dongo distinguished himself by his rabidity; the extravagance of his sentiments carried him naturally to the head of his party. These gentlemen, quite worthy people when they were not in a state of panic, but who were always trembling, succeeded in getting round the Austrian General: a good enough man at heart, he let himself be persuaded that severity was the best policy, and ordered the arrest of one hundred and fifty patriots: quite the best man to be found in Italy at the time.

They were speedily deported to the Bocche di Cattaro, and, flung into subterranean caves, the moisture and above all the want of bread did prompt justice to each and all of these rascals.

The Marchese del Dongo had an exalted position, and, as he combined with a host of other fine qualities a sordid avarice, he would boast publicly that he never sent a scudo to his sister, the Contessa Pietranera: still madly in love, she refused to leave her husband, and was starving by his side in France. The good Marchesa was in despair; finally she managed to abstract a few small diamonds from her jewel case, which her husband took from her every evening to stow away under his bed, in an iron coffer: the Marchesa had brought him a dowry of 800,000 francs, and received 80 francs monthly for her personal expenses. During the thirteen months in which the French were absent from Milan, this most timid of women found various pretexts and never went out of mourning.

We must confess that, following the example of many grave authors, we have begun the history of our hero a year before his birth. This essential personage is none other than Fabrizio Valserra, Marchesino del Dongo, as the style is at Milan.

[By the local custom, borrowed from Germany, this title is given to every son of a Marchese; Contino to the son of a Conte, Contessina to the daughter of a Conte, etc.]

He had taken the trouble to be born just when the French were driven out, and found himself, by the accident of birth, the second son of that Marchese del Dongo who was so great a gentleman, and with whose fat, pasty face, false smile and unbounded hatred for the new ideas the reader is already acquainted. The whole of the family fortune was already settled upon the elder son, Ascanio del Dongo, the worthy image of his father. He was eight years old and Fabrizio two when all of a sudden that General Bonaparte, whom everyone of good family understood to have been hanged long ago, came down from the Mont Saint–Bernard. He entered Milan: that moment is still unique in history; imagine a whole populace madly in love. A few days later, Napoleon won the battle of Marengo. The rest needs no telling. The frenzy of the Milanese reached its climax; but this time it was mingled with ideas of vengeance: these good people had been taught to hate. Presently they saw arrive in their midst all that remained of the patriots deported to the Bocche di Cattaro; their return was celebrated with a national festa. Their pale faces, their great startled eyes, their shrunken limbs were in strange contrast to the joy that broke out on every side. Their arrival was the signal for departure for the families most deeply compromised. The Marchese del Dongo was one of the first to flee to his castle of Grianta. The heads of the great families were filled with hatred and fear; but their wives, their daughters, remembered the joys of the former French occupation, and thought with regret of Milan and those gay balls, which, immediately after Marengo, were organised afresh at the casa Tanzi. A few days after the victory, the French General responsible for maintaining order in Lombardy discovered that all the farmers on the noblemen's estates, all the old wives in the villages, so far from still thinking of this astonishing victory at Marengo, which had altered the destinies of Italy and recaptured thirteen fortified positions in a single day, had their minds occupied only by a prophecy of San Giovila, the principal Patron Saint of Brescia. According to this inspired utterance, the prosperity of France and of Napoleon was to cease just thirteen weeks after Marengo. What does to some extent excuse the Marchese del Dongo and all the nobles sulking on their estates is that literally and without any affectation they believed in the prophecy. Not one of these gentlemen had read as many as four volumes in his life; quite openly they were making their preparations to return to Milan at the end of the thirteen weeks; but time, as it went on, recorded fresh successes for the cause of France. Returning to Paris, Napoleon, by wise decrees, saved the country from revolution at home as he had saved it from its foreign enemies

at Marengo. Then the Lombard nobles, in the safe shelter of their castles, discovered that at first they had misinterpreted the prophecy of the holy patron of Brescia; it was a question not of thirteen weeks, but of thirteen months. The thirteen months went by, and the prosperity of France seemed to increase daily.

We pass lightly over ten years of progress and happiness, from 1800 to 1810. Fabrizio spent the first part of this decade at the castle of Grianta, giving and receiving an abundance of fisticuffs among the little contadini of the village, and learning nothing, not even how to read. Later on, he was sent to the Jesuit College at Milan. The Marchese, his father, insisted on his being shewn the Latin tongue, not on any account in the works of those ancient writers who are always talking about Republics, but in a magnificent volume adorned with more than a hundred engravings, a masterpiece of seventeenth-century art; this was the Lathi genealogy of the Valserra, Marchesi del Dongo, published in 1650 by Fabrizio del Dongo, Archbishop of Parma. The fortunes of the Valserra being preeminently military, the engravings represented any number of battles, and everywhere one saw some hero of the name dealing mighty blows with his sword. This book greatly delighted the young Fabrizio. His mother, who adored him, obtained permission, from time to time, to pay him a visit at Milan; but as her husband never offered her any money for these journeys, it was her sister-in-law, the charming Contessa Pietranera, who lent her what she required. After the return of the French, the Contessa had become one of the most brilliant ladies at the court of Prince Eugène, the Viceroy of Italy.

When Fabrizio had made his First Communion, she obtained leave from the Marchese, still in voluntary exile, to invite him out, now and again, from his college. She found him unusual, thoughtful, very serious, but a nice-looking boy and not at all out of place in the drawing-room of a lady of fashion; otherwise, as ignorant as one could wish, and barely able to write. The Contessa, who carried her impulsive character into everything, promised her protection to the head of the establishment provided that her nephew Fabrizio made astounding progress and carried off a number of prizes at the end of the year. So that he should be in a position to deserve them, she used to send for bun every Saturday evening, and often did not restore him to his masters until the following Wednesday or Thursday. The Jesuits, although tenderly cherished by the Prince Viceroy, were expelled from Italy by the

laws of the Kingdom, and the Superior of the College, an able man, was conscious of all that might be made out of his relations with a woman all-powerful at court. He never thought of complaining of the absences of Fabrizio, who, more ignorant than ever, at the end of the year was awarded five first prizes. This being so, the Contessa, escorted by her husband, now the General commanding one of the Divisions of the Guard, and by five or six of the most important personages at the viceregal court, came to attend the prize-giving at the Jesuit College. The Superior was complimented by his chiefs.

The Contessa took her nephew with her to all those brilliant festivities which marked the too brief reign of the sociable Prince Eugène. She had on her own authority created him an officer of hussars, and Fabrizio, now twelve years old, wore that uniform. One day the Contessa, enchanted by his handsome figure, besought the Prince to give him a post as page, a request which implied that the del Dongo family was coming round. Next day she had need of all her credit to secure the Viceroy's kind consent not to remember this request, which lacked only the consent of the prospective page's father, and this consent would have been emphatically refused. After this act of folly, which made the sullen Marchese shudder, he found an excuse to recall young Fabrizio to Grianta. The Contessa had a supreme contempt for her brother, she regarded him as a melancholy fool, and one who would be troublesome if ever it lay in his power. But she was madly fond of Fabrizio, and, after ten years of silence, wrote to the Marchese reclaiming her nephew; her letter was left unanswered.

On his return to this formidable palace, built by the most bellicose of his ancestors, Fabrizio knew nothing in the world except how to drill and how to sit on a horse. Conte Pietranera, as fond of the boy as was his wife, used often to put him on a horse and take him with him on parade.

On reaching the castle of Grianta, Fabrizio, his eyes still red with the tears that he had shed on leaving his aunt's fine rooms, found only the passionate caresses of his mother and sisters. The Marchese was closeted in his study with his elder son, the Marchesino Ascanio; there they composed letters in cipher which had the honour to be forwarded to Vienna; father and son appeared in public only at meal-times. The Marchese used ostentatiously to repeat that he was teaching his natural successor to keep, by double entry,

the accounts of the produce of each of his estates. As a matter of fact, the Marchese was too jealous of his own power ever to speak of these matters to a son, the necessary inheritor of all these entailed properties. He employed him to cipher despatches of fifteen or twenty pages which two or throe times weekly he had conveyed into Switzerland, where they were put on the road for Vienna. The Marchese claimed to inform his rightful Sovereign of the internal condition of the Kingdom of Italy, of which he himself knew nothing, and his letters were invariably most successful, for the following reason: the Marchese would have a count taken on the high road, by some trusted agent, of the number of men in a certain French or Italian regiment that was changing its station, and in reporting the fact to the court of Vienna would take care to reduce by at least a quarter the number of the troops on the march. These letters, in other respects absurd, had the merit of contradicting others of greater accuracy, and gave pleasure. And so, a short time before Fabrizio's arrival at the castle, the Marchese had received the star of a famous order: it was the fifth to adorn his Chamberlain's coat. As a matter of fact, he suffered from the chagrin of not daring to sport this garment outside his study; but he never allowed himself to dictate a despatch without first putting on the gold-laced coat, studded with all his orders. He would have felt himself to be wanting in respect had he acted otherwise.

The Marchesa was amazed by her son's graces. But she had kept up the habit of writing two or three times every year to General Comte d'A —— , which was the title now borne by Lieutenant Robert. The Marchesa had a horror of lying to the people to whom she was attached; she examined her son and was appalled by his ignorance.

"If he appears to me to have learned little," she said to herself, "to me who know nothing, Robert, who is so clever, would find that his education had been entirely neglected; and in these days one must have merit." Another peculiarity, which astonished her almost as much, was that Fabrizio had taken seriously all the religious teaching that had been instilled into him by the Jesuits. Although very pious herself, the fanaticism of this child made her shudder; "If the Marchese has the sense to discover this way of influencing him, he will take my son's affection from me." She wept copiously, and her passion for Fabrizio was thereby increased.

Life in this castle, peopled by thirty or forty servants, was extremely dull; accordingly Fabrizio spent all his days in pursuit of game or exploring the lake in a boat. Soon he was on intimate terms with the coachmen and grooms; these were all hot supporters of the French, and laughed openly at the pious valets, attached to the person of the Marchese or to that of his elder son. The great theme for wit at the expense of these solemn personages was that, in imitation of their masters, they powdered their heads.

CHAPTER TWO

. . . Alors que Vesper vient embrunir nos yeux, Tout épris d'avenir, je contemple les deux, En qui Dieu nous escrit, par notes non obscures, Les sorts et les destins de toutes créatures. Car lui, du fond des deux regardant un humain, Parfois mû de pitié, lui montre le chemin; Par les astres du ciel qui sont ses caractères, Les choses nous prédit et bonnes et contraires; Mais les hommes chargés de terre et de trépas, Méprisent tel écrit, et ne le lisent pas.

RONSARD.

The Marchese professed a vigorous hatred of enlightenment: "It is ideas," he used to say, "that have ruined Italy"; he did not know quite how to reconcile this holy horror of instruction with his desire to see his son Fabrizio perfect the education so brilliantly begun with the Jesuits. In order to incur the least possible risk, he charged the good Priore Blanès, parish priest of Grianta, with the task of continuing Fabrizio's Latin studies. For this it was necessary that the priest should himself know that language; whereas it was to him an object of scorn; his knowledge in the matter being confined to the recitation, by heart, of the prayers in his missal, the meaning of which he could interpret more or less to his flock. But this priest was nevertheless highly respected and indeed feared throughout the district; he had always said that it was by no means in thirteen weeks, nor even in thirteen months that they would see the fulfilment of the famous prophecy of San Giovila, the Patron Saint of Brescia. He added, when he was speaking to friends whom he could trust, that this number thirteen was to be interpreted in a fashion which would astonish many people, if it were permitted to say all that one knew (1813).

The fact was that the Priore Blanès, a man whose honesty and virtue were primitive, and a man of parts as well, spent all his nights up in his belfry; he was mad on astrology. After using up all his days in calculating the conjunctions and positions of the stars, he would devote the greater part of

his nights to following their course in the sky. Such was his poverty, he had no other instrument than a long telescope with pasteboard tubes. One may imagine the contempt that was felt for the study of languages by a man who spent his time discovering the precise dates of the fall of empires and the revolutions that change the face of the world. “What more do I know about a horse,” he asked Fabrizio, “when I am told that in Latin it is called equus?”

The contadini looked upon Priore Blanès with awe as a great magician: for his part, by dint of the fear that his nightly stations in the belfry inspired, he restrained them from stealing. His clerical brethren in the surrounding parishes, intensely jealous of his influence, detested him; the Marchese del Dongo merely despised him, because he reasoned too much for a man of such humble station. Fabrizio adored him: to gratify him he sometimes spent whole evenings in doing enormous sums of addition or multiplication. Then he would go up to the belfry: this was a great favour and one that Priore Blanès had never granted to anyone; but he liked the boy for his simplicity. “If you do not turn out a hypocrite,” he would say to him, “you will perhaps be a man.”

Two or three times in a year, Fabrizio, intrepid and passionate in his pleasures, came within an inch of drowning himself in the lake. He was the leader of all the great expeditions made by the young contadini of Grianta and Cadenabbia. These boys had procured a number of little keys, and on very dark nights would try to open the padlocks of the chains that fastened the boats to some big stone or to a tree growing by the water’s edge. It should be explained that on the Lake of Como the fishermen in the pursuit of their calling put out night-lines at a great distance from the shore. The upper end of the line is attached to a plank kept afloat by a cork keel, and a supple hazel twig, fastened to this plank, supports a little bell which rings whenever a fish, caught on the line, gives a tug to the float.

The great object of these nocturnal expeditions, of which Fabrizio was commander in chief, was to go out and visit the night-lines before the fishermen had heard the warning note of the little bells. They used to choose stormy weather, and for these hazardous exploits would embark in the early morning, an hour before dawn. As they climbed into the boat, these boys imagined themselves to be plunging into the greatest dangers; this was the finer aspect of their behaviour; and, following the example of their fathers,

would devoutly repeat a Hail, Mary. Now it frequently happened that at the moment of starting, and immediately after the Hail, Mary, Fabrizio was struck by a foreboding. This was the fruit which he had gathered from the astronomical studies of his friend Priore Blanès, in whose predictions he had no faith whatsoever. According to his youthful imagination, this foreboding announced to him infallibly the success or failure of the expedition; and, as he had a stronger will than any of his companions, in course of time the whole band had so formed the habit of having forebodings that if, at the moment of embarking, one of them caught sight of a priest on the shore, or if someone saw a crow fly past on his left, they would hasten to replace the padlock on the chain of the boat, and each would go off to his bed. Thus Priore Blanès had not imparted his somewhat difficult science to Fabrizio; but, unconsciously, had infected him with an unbounded confidence in the signs by which the future can be foretold.

The Marchese felt that any accident to his ciphered correspondence might put him at the mercy of his sister; and so every year, at the feast of Sant'Angela, which was Contessa Pietranera's name-day, Fabrizio was given leave to go and spend a week at Milan. He lived through the year looking hopefully forward or sadly back to this week. On this great occasion, to carry out this politic mission, the Marchese handed over to his son four scudi, and, in accordance with his custom, gave nothing to his wife, who took the boy. But one of the cooks, six lackeys and a coachman with a pair of horses started for Como the day before, and every day at Milan the Marchesa found a carriage at her disposal and a dinner of twelve covers.

The sullen sort of life that was led by the Marchese del Dongo was certainly by no means entertaining, but it had this advantage that it permanently enriched the families who were kind enough to sacrifice themselves to it. The Marchese, who had an income of more than two hundred thousand lire, did not spend a quarter of that sum; he was living on hope. Throughout the thirteen years from 1800 to 1813, he constantly and firmly believed that Napoleon would be overthrown within six months. One may judge of his rapture when, at the beginning of 1813, he learned of the disasters of the Beresima! The taking of Paris and the fall of Napoleon almost made him lose his head; he then allowed himself to make the most outrageous remarks to his wife and sister. Finally, after fourteen years of waiting, he had that unspeakable joy of seeing the Austrian troops re-enter Milan. In obedience to

orders issued from Vienna, the Austrian General received the Marchese del Dongo with a consideration akin to respect; they hastened to offer him one of the highest posts in the government; and he accepted it as the payment of a debt. His elder son obtained a lieutenancy in one of the smartest regiments of the Monarchy, but the younger repeatedly declined to accept a cadetship which was offered him. This triumph, in which the Marchese exulted with a rare insolence, lasted but a few months, and was followed by a humiliating reverse. Never had he had any talent for business, and fourteen years spent in the country among his footmen, his lawyer and his doctor, added to the crustiness of old age which had overtaken him, had left him totally incapable of conducting business in any form. Now it is not possible, in an Austrian country, to keep an important place without having the kind of talent that is required by the slow and complicated, but highly reasonable administration of that venerable Monarchy. The blunders made by the Marchese del Dongo scandalised the staff of his office, and even obstructed the course of public business. His ultra-monarchist utterances irritated the populace which the authorities sought to lull into a heedless slumber. One fine day he learned that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to accept the resignation which he had submitted of his post in the administration, and at the same time conferred on him the place of Second Grand Major-domo Major of the Lombardo–Venetian Kingdom. The Marchese was furious at the atrocious injustice of which he had been made a victim; he printed an open letter to a friend, he who so inveighed against the liberty of the press. Finally, he wrote to the Emperor that his Ministers were playing him false, and were no better than Jacobins. These things accomplished, he went sadly back to his castle of Grianta. He had one consolation. After the fall of Napoleon, certain powerful personages at Milan planned an assault in the streets on Conte Prina, a former Minister of the King of Italy, and a man of the highest merit. Conte Pietranera risked his own life to save that of the Minister, who was killed by blows from umbrellas after five hours of agony. A priest, the Marchese del Bongo's confessor, could have saved Prina by opening the wicket of the church of San Giovanni, in front of which the unfortunate Minister was dragged, and indeed left for a moment in the gutter, in the middle of the street; but he refused with derision to open his wicket, and, six months afterwards, the Marchese was happily able to secure for him a fine advancement.

He execrated Conte Pietranera, his brother-in-law, who, not having an income of 50 louis, had the audacity to be quite content, made a point of showing himself loyal to what he had loved all his life, and had the insolence to preach that spirit of justice without regard for persons, which the Marchese called an infamous piece of Jacobinism. The Conte had refused to take service in Austria; this refusal was remembered against him, and, a few months after the death of Prina, the same persons who had hired the assassins contrived that General Pietranera should be flung into prison. Whereupon the Contessa, his wife, procured a passport and sent for posthorses to go to Vienna to tell the Emperor the truth. Prina's assassins took fright, and one of them, a cousin of Signora Pietranera, came to her at midnight, an hour before she was to start for Vienna, with the order for her husband's release. Next day, the Austrian General sent for Conte Pietranera, received him with every possible mark of distinction, and assured him that his pension as a retired officer would be issued to him without delay and on the most liberal scale. The gallant General Bubna, a man of sound judgement and warm heart, seemed quite ashamed of the assassination of Prina and the Conte's imprisonment.

After this brief storm, allayed by the Contessa's firmness of character, the couple lived, for better or worse, on the retired pay for which, thanks to General Bubna's recommendation, they were not long kept waiting.

Fortunately, it so happened that, for the last five or six years, the Contessa had been on the most friendly terms with a very rich young man, who was also an intimate friend of the Conte, and never failed to place at their disposal the finest team of English horses to be seen in Milan at the time, his box in the theatre alla Scala and his villa in the country. But the Conte had a sense of his own valour, he was full of generous impulses, he was easily carried away, and at such times allowed himself to make imprudent speeches. One day when he was out shooting with some young men, one of them, who had served under other flags than his, began to belittle the courage of the soldiers of the Cisalpine Republic. The Conte struck him, a fight at once followed, and the Conte, who was without support among all these young men, was killed. This species of duel gave rise to a great deal of talk, and the persons who had been engaged in it took the precaution of going for a tour in Switzerland.

That absurd form of courage which is called resignation, the courage of a fool who allows himself to be hanged without a word of protest, was not at all in keeping with the Contessa's character. Furious at the death of her husband, she would have liked Limercati, the rich young man, her intimate friend, to be seized also by the desire to travel in Switzerland, and there to shoot or otherwise assault the murderer of Conte Pietranera.

Limercati thought this plan the last word in absurdity, and the Contessa discovered that in herself contempt for him had killed her affection. She multiplied her attentions to Limercati; she sought to rekindle his love, and then to leave him stranded and so make him desperate. To render this plan of vengeance intelligible to French readers, I should explain that at Milan, in a land widely remote from our own, people are still made desperate by love. The Contessa, who, in her widow's weeds, easily eclipsed any of her rivals, flirted with all the young men of rank and fashion, and one of these, Conte N ——— , who, from the first, had said that he felt Limercati's good qualities to be rather heavy, rather starched for so spirited a woman, fell madly in love with her. She wrote to Limercati:

"Will you for once act like a man of spirit? Please to consider that you have never known me.

"I am, with a trace of contempt perhaps, your most humble servant,

"GINA PIETRANERA."

After reading this missive, Limercati set off for one of his country seats, his love rose to a climax, he became quite mad and spoke of blowing out his brains, an unheard-of thing in countries where hell is believed in. Within twenty-four hours of his arrival in the country, he had written to the Contessa offering her his hand and his rent-roll of 200,000 francs. She sent him back his letter, with its seal unbroken, by Conte N — —'s groom. Whereupon Limercati spent three years on his estates, returning every other month to Milan, but without ever having the courage to remain there, and boring all his friends with his passionate love for the Contessa and his detailed accounts of the favours she had formerly bestowed on him. At first, he used to add that with Conte N ——— she was ruining herself, and that such a connexion was degrading to her.

The fact of the matter was that the Contessa had no sort of love for Conte N —— , and she told him as much when she had made quite sure of Limercati's despair. The Conte, who was no novice, besought her upon no account to divulge the sad truth which she had confided to him. "If you will be so extremely indulgent," he added, "as to continue to receive me with all the outward distinctions accorded to a reigning lover, I may perhaps be able to find a suitable position."

After this heroic declaration the Contessa declined to avail herself any longer either of Conte N — —'s horses or of his box. But for the last fifteen years she had been accustomed to the most fashionable style of living; she had now to solve that difficult, or rather impossible, problem: how to live in Milan on a pension of 1,500 francs. She left her palazzo, took a pair of rooms on a fifth floor, dismissed all her servants, including even her own maid whose place she filled with a poor old woman to do the housework. This sacrifice was as a matter of fact less heroic and less painful than it appears to us; at Milan poverty is not a thing to laugh at, and therefore does not present itself to trembling souls as the worst of evils. After some months of this noble poverty, besieged by incessant letters from Limercati, and indeed from Conte N —— , who also wished to marry her, it came to pass that the Marchese del Dongo, miserly as a rule to the last degree, bethought himself that his enemies might find a cause for triumph in his sister's plight. What! A del Dongo reduced to living upon the pension which the court of Vienna, of which he had so many grounds for complaint, grants to the widows of its Generals!

He wrote to inform her that an apartment and an allowance worthy of his sister awaited her at the castle of Grianta.

The Contessa's volatile mind embraced with enthusiasm the idea of this new mode of life; it was twenty years since she had lived in that venerable castle that rose majestically from among its old chestnuts planted in the days of the Sforza. "There," she told herself, "I shall find repose, and, at my age, is not that in itself happiness?" (Having reached one-and-thirty, she imagined that the time had come for her to retire.) "On that sublime lake by which I was born, there awaits me at last a happy and peaceful existence."

I cannot say whether she was mistaken, but one thing certain is that this passionate soul, which had just refused so lightly the offer of two vast fortunes, brought happiness to the castle of Grianta. Her two nieces were wild with joy. “You have renewed the dear days of my youth,” the Marchesa told her, as she took her in her arms; “before you came, I was a hundred.” The Contessa set out to revisit, with Fabrizio, all those enchanting spots in the neighbourhood of Grianta, which travellers have made so famous: the Villa Melzi on the other shore of the lake, opposite the castle, and commanding a fine view of it; higher up, the sacred wood of the Sfrondata, and the bold promontory which divides the two arms of the lake, that of Como, so voluptuous, and the other, which runs towards Lecco, grimly severe: sublime and charming views which the most famous site in the world, the Bay of Naples, may equal, but does not surpass. It was with ecstasy that the Contessa recaptured the memories of her earliest childhood and compared them with her present sensations. “The Lake of Como,” she said to herself, “is not surrounded, like the Lake of Geneva, by wide tracts of land enclosed and cultivated according to the most approved methods, which suggest money and speculation. Here, on every side, I see hills of irregular height covered with clumps of trees that have grown there at random, which the hand of man has never yet spoiled and forced to yield a return. Standing among these admirably shaped hills which run down to the lake at such curious angles, I can preserve all the illusions of Tasso’s and Ariosto’s descriptions. All is noble and tender, everything speaks of love, nothing recalls the ugliness of civilisation. The villages halfway up their sides are hidden in tall trees, and above the tree-tops rises the charming architecture of their picturesque belfries. If some little field fifty yards across comes here and there to interrupt the clumps of chestnuts and wild cherries, the satisfied eye sees growing on it plants more vigorous and happier than elsewhere. Beyond these hills, the crests of which offer one hermitages in all of which one would like to dwell, the astonished eye perceives the peaks of the Alps, always covered in snow, and their stern austerity recalls to one so much of the sorrows of life as is necessary to enhance one’s immediate pleasure. The imagination is touched by the distant sound of the bell of some little village hidden among the trees: these sounds, borne across the waters which soften their tone, assume a tinge of gentle melancholy and resignation, and seem to be saying to man: ‘Life is fleeting: do not therefore show yourself so obdurate towards the happiness that is offered you, make haste to enjoy it.’ “ The language of these enchanting spots, which have not their like in the

world, restored to the Contessa the heart of a girl of sixteen. She could not conceive how she could have spent all these years without revisiting the lake. “Is it then to the threshold of old age,” she asked herself, “that our happiness takes flight?” She bought a boat which Fabrizio, the Marchesa and she decorated with their own hands, having no money to spend on anything, in the midst of this most luxurious establishment; since his disgrace the Marchese del Dongo had doubled his aristocratic state. For example, in order to reclaim ten yards of land from the lake, near the famous plane avenue, in the direction of Cadenabbia, he had an embankment built the estimate for which ran to 80,000 francs. At the end of this embankment there rose, from the plans of the famous Marchese Gagnola, a chapel built entirely of huge blocks of granite, and in this chapel Marchesi, the sculptor then in fashion at Milan, built him a tomb on which a number of bas-reliefs were intended to represent the gallant deeds of his ancestors.

Fabrizio’s elder brother, the Marchesino Ascanio, sought to join the ladies in their excursions; but his aunt flung water over his powdered hair, and found some fresh dart every day with which to puncture his solemnity. At length he delivered from the sight of his fat, pasty face the merry troop who did not venture to laugh in his presence. They supposed him to be the spy of the Marchese, his father, and care had to be taken in handling that stern despot, always in a furious temper since his enforced retirement.

Ascanio swore to be avenged on Fabrizio.

There was a storm in which they were all in danger; although they were infinitely short of money, they paid the two boatmen generously not to say anything to the Marchese, who already was showing great ill humour at their taking his two daughters with them. They encountered a second storm; the storms on this lake are terrible and unexpected: gusts of wind sweep out suddenly from the two mountain gorges which run down into it on opposite sides and join battle on the water. The Contessa wished to land in the midst of the hurricane and pealing thunder; she insisted that, if she were to climb to a rock that stood up by itself in the middle of the lake and was the size of a small room, she would enjoy a curious spectacle; she would see herself assailed on all sides by raging waves; but in jumping out of the boat she fell into the water. Fabrizio dived in after her to save her, and both were carried away for some distance. No doubt it is not a pleasant thing to feel oneself

drowning; but the spirit of boredom, taken by surprise, was banished from the feudal castle. The Contessa conceived a passionate enthusiasm for the primitive nature of the Priore Blanès and for his astrology. The little money that remained to her after the purchase of the boat had been spent on buying a spy-glass, and almost every evening, with her nieces and Fabrizio, she would take her stand on the platform of one of the Gothic towers of the castle. Fabrizio was the learned one of the party, and they spent many hours there very pleasantly, out of reach of the spies.

It must be admitted that there were days on which the Contessa did not utter a word to anyone; she would be seen strolling under the tall chestnuts lost in sombre meditations; she was too clever a woman not to feel at times the tedium of having no one with whom to exchange ideas. But next day she would be laughing as before: it was the lamentations of her sister-in-law, the Marchesa, that produced these sombre impressions on a mind naturally so active.

“Are we to spend all the youth that is left to us in this gloomy castle?” the Marchesa used to exclaim.

Before the Contessa came, she had not had the courage even to feel these regrets.

Such was their life during the winter of 1814 and 1815. On two occasions, in spite of her poverty, the Contessa went to spend a few days at Milan; she was anxious to see a sublime ballet by Vigano, given at the Scala, and the Marchese raised no objections to his wife’s accompanying her sister-in-law. They went to draw the arrears of the little pension, and it was the penniless widow of the Cisalpine General who lent a few sequins to the millionaire Marchesa del Dongo. These parties were delightful; they invited old friends to dinner, and consoled themselves by laughing at everything, just like children. This Italian gaiety, full of surprise and brio, made them forget the atmosphere of sombre gloom which the stern faces of the Marchese and his elder son spread around them at Grianta. Fabrizio, though barely sixteen, represented the head of the house admirably.

On the 7th of March, 1815, the ladies had been back for two days after a charming little excursion to Milan; they were strolling under the fine avenue

of plane trees, then recently extended to the very edge of the lake. A boat appeared, coming from the direction of Como, and made strange signals. One of the Marchese's agents leaped out upon the bank: Napoleon had just landed from the Gulf of Juan. Europe was kind enough to be surprised at this event, which did not at all surprise the Marchese del Dongo; he wrote his Sovereign a letter full of the most cordial effusion; he offered him his talents and several millions of money, and informed him once again that his Ministers were Jacobins and in league with the ringleaders in Paris.

On the 8th of March, at six o'clock in the morning, the Marchese, wearing all his orders, was making his elder son dictate to him the draft of a third political despatch; he was solemnly occupied in transcribing this in his fine and careful hand, upon paper that bore the Sovereign's effigy as a watermark. At the same moment, Fabrizio was knocking at Contessa Pietranera's door.

"I am off," he informed her, "I am going to join the Emperor who is also King of Italy; he was such a good friend to your husband! I shall travel through Switzerland. Last night, at Menaggio, my friend Vasi, the dealer in barometers, gave me his passport; now you must give me a few napoleons, for I have only a couple on me; but if necessary I shall go on foot."

The Contessa wept with joy and grief. "Great Heavens! What can have put that idea into your head?" she cried, seizing Fabrizio's hands in her own.

She rose and went to fetch from the linen-cupboard, where it was carefully hidden, a little purse embroidered with pearls; it was all that she possessed in the world.

"Take it," she said to Fabrizio; "but, in heaven's name, do not let yourself be killed. What will your poor mother and I have left, if you are taken from us? As for Napoleon's succeeding, that, my poor boy, is impossible; our gentlemen will certainly manage to destroy him. Did you not hear, a week ago, at Milan the story of the twenty-three plots to assassinate him, all so carefully planned, from which it was only by a miracle that he escaped? And at that time he was all-powerful. And you have seen that it is not the will to destroy him that is lacking in our enemies; France ceased to count after he left it."

It was in a tone of the keenest emotion that the Contessa spoke to Fabrizio of the fate in store for Napoleon. “In allowing you to go to join him, I am sacrificing to him the dearest thing I have in the world,” she said. Fabrizio’s eyes grew moist, he shed tears as he embraced the Contessa, but his determination to be off was never for a moment shaken. He explained with effusion to this beloved friend all the reasons that had led to his decision, reasons which we take the liberty of finding highly attractive.

“Yesterday evening, it wanted seven minutes to six, we were strolling, you remember, by the shore of the lake along the plane avenue, below the casa Sommariva, and we were facing the south. It was there that I first noticed, in the distance, the boat that was coming from Como, bearing such great tidings. As I looked at this boat without thinking of the Emperor, and only envying the lot of those who are free to travel, suddenly I felt myself seized by a profound emotion. The boat touched ground, the agent said something in a low tone to my father, who changed colour, and took us aside to announce the terrible news. I turned towards the lake with no other object but to hide the tears of joy that were flooding my eyes. Suddenly, at an immense height in the sky and on my right-hand side, I saw an eagle, the bird of Napoleon; he flew majestically past making for Switzerland, and consequently for Paris. ‘And I too,’ I said to myself at that moment, ‘will fly across Switzerland with the speed of an eagle, and will go to offer that great man a very little thing, but the only thing, after all, that I have to offer him, the support of my feeble arm. He wished to give us a country, and he loved my uncle.’ At that instant, while I was gazing at the eagle, in some strange way my tears ceased to flow; and the proof that this idea came from above is that at the same moment, without any discussion, I made up my mind to go, and saw how the journey might be made. In the twinkling of an eye all the sorrows that, as you know, are poisoning my life, especially on Sundays, seemed to be swept away by a breath from heaven. I saw that mighty figure of Italy raise herself from the mire in which the Germans keep her plunged;† she stretched out her mangled arms still half loaded with chains towards her King and Liberator. ‘And I,’ I said to myself, ‘a son as yet unknown to fame of that unhappy Mother, I shall go forth to die or to conquer with that man marked out by destiny, who sought to cleanse us from the scorn that is heaped upon us by even the most enslaved and the vilest among the inhabitants of Europe.’

[† The speaker is carried away by passion; he is rendering in prose some lines of the famous Monti.]

“You know,” he added in a low tone drawing nearer to’ the Contessa, and fastening upon her a pair of eyes from which fire darted, “you know that young chestnut which my mother, in the winter in which I was born, planted with her own hands beside the big spring in our forest, two leagues from here; before doing anything else I wanted to visit it. ‘The spring is not far advanced,’ I said to myself, ‘very well, if my tree is in leaf, that shall be a sign for me. I also must emerge from the state of torpor in which I am languishing in this cold and dreary castle.’ Do you not feel that these old blackened walls, the symbols now as they were once the instruments of despotism, are a perfect image of the dreariness of winter? They are to me what winter is to my tree.

“Would you believe it, Gina? Yesterday evening at half past seven I came to my chestnut; it had leaves, pretty little leaves that were quite big already! I kissed them, carefully so as not to hurt them. I turned the soil reverently round the dear tree. At once filled with a fresh enthusiasm, I crossed the mountain; I came to Menaggio: I needed a passport to enter Switzerland. The time had flown, it was already one o’clock in the morning when I found myself at Vasi’s door. I thought that I should have to knock for a long time to arouse him, but he was sitting up with three of his friends. At the first word I uttered: ‘You are going to join Napoleon,’ he cried; and he fell on my neck. The others too embraced me with rapture. ‘Why am I married?’ I heard one of them say.”

Signora Pietranera had grown pensive. She felt that she must offer a few objections. If Fabrizio had had the slightest experience of life, he would have seen quite well that the Contessa herself did not believe in the sound reasons which she hastened to urge on him. But, failing experience, he had resolution; he did not condescend even to hear what those reasons were. The Contessa presently came down to making him promise that at least he would inform his mother of his intention.

“She will tell my sisters, and those women will betray me without knowing it!” cried Fabrizio with a sort of heroic grandeur.

“You should speak more respectfully,” said the Contessa, smiling through her tears, “of the sex that will make your fortune; for you will never appeal to men, you have too much fire for prosaic souls.”

The Marchesa dissolved in tears on learning her son’s strange plan; she could not feel its heroism, and did everything in her power to keep him at home. When she was convinced that nothing in the world, except the walls of a prison, could prevent him from starting, she handed over to him the little money that she possessed; then she remembered that she had also, the day before, received nine or ten small diamonds, worth perhaps ten thousand francs, which the Marchese had entrusted to her to take to Milan to be set. Fabrizio’s sisters came into their mother’s room while the Contessa was sewing these diamonds into our hero’s travelling coat; he handed the poor women back their humble napoleons. His sisters were so enthusiastic over his plan, they kissed him with so clamorous a joy that he took in his hand the diamonds that had still to be concealed and was for starting off there and then.

“You will betray me without knowing it,” he said to his sisters. “Since I have all this money, there is no need to take clothes; one can get them anywhere.” He embraced these dear ones and set off at once without even going back to his own room. He walked so fast, afraid of being followed by men on horseback, that before night he had entered Lugano. He was now, thank heaven, in a Swiss town, and had no longer any fear of being waylaid on the lonely road by constables in his father’s pay. From this haven, he wrote him a fine letter, a boyish weakness which gave strength and substance to the Marchese’s anger. Fabrizio took the post, crossed the Saint–Gothard; his progress was rapid, and he entered France by Pontarlier. The Emperor was in Paris. There Fabrizio’s troubles began; he had started out with the firm intention of speaking to the Emperor: it had never occurred to him that this might be a difficult matter. At Milan, ten times daily he used to see Prince Eugène, and could have spoken to him had he wished. In Paris, every morning he went to the courtyard of the Tuileries to watch the reviews held by Napoleon; but never was he able to come near the Emperor. Our hero imagined all the French to be profoundly disturbed, as he himself was, by the extreme peril in which their country lay. At table in the hotel in which he was staying, he made no mystery about his plans; he found several young men with charming manners, even more enthusiastic than himself, who, in a

very few days, did not fail to rob him of all the money that he possessed. Fortunately, out of pure modesty, he had said nothing of the diamonds given him by his mother. On the morning when, after an orgy overnight, he found that he had been decidedly robbed, he bought a fine pair of horses, engaged as servant an old soldier, one of the dealer's grooms, and, filled with contempt for the young men of Paris with their fine speeches, set out to join the army. He knew nothing except that it was concentrated near Maubeuge. No sooner had he reached the frontier than he felt that it would be absurd for him to stay in a house, toasting himself before a good fire, when there were soldiers in bivouac outside. In spite of the remonstrances of his servant, who was not lacking in common sense, he rashly made his way to the bivouacs on the extreme frontier, on the road into Belgium. No sooner had he reached the first battalion that was resting by the side of the road than the soldiers began to stare at the sight of this young civilian in whose appearance there was nothing that suggested uniform. Night was falling, a cold wind blew. Fabrizio went up to a fire and offered to pay for hospitality. The soldiers looked at one another amazed more than anything at the idea of payment, and willingly made room for him by the fire. His servant constructed a shelter for him. But, an hour later, the adjudant of the regiment happening to pass near the bivouac, the soldiers went to report to him the arrival of this stranger speaking bad French. The adjudant questioned Fabrizio, who spoke to him of his enthusiasm for the Emperor in an accent which aroused grave suspicion; whereupon this under-officer requested our hero to go with him to the Colonel, whose headquarters were in a neighbouring farm. Fabrizio's servant came up with the two horses. The sight of them seemed to make so forcible an impression upon the adjudant that immediately he changed his mind and began to interrogate the servant also. The latter, an old soldier, guessing his questioner's plan of campaign from the first, spoke of the powerful protection which his master enjoyed, adding that certainly they would not bone his fine horses. At once a soldier called by the adjudant put his hand on the servant's collar; another soldier took charge of the horses, and, with an air of severity, the adjudant ordered Fabrizio to follow him and not to answer back.

After making him cover a good league on foot, in the darkness rendered apparently more intense by the fires of the bivouacs which lighted the horizon on every side, the adjutant handed Fabrizio over to an officer of gendarmerie who, with a grave air, asked for his papers. Fabrizio showed his

passport, which described him as a dealer in barometers travelling with his wares.

“What fools they are!” cried the officer; “this really is too much.”

He put a number of questions to our hero, who spoke of the Emperor and of Liberty in terms of the keenest enthusiasm; whereupon the officer of gendarmerie went off in peals of laughter.

“Gad! You’re no good at telling a tale!” he cried. “It is a bit too much of a good thing their daring to send us young mugs like you!” And despite all the protestations of Fabrizio, who was dying to explain that he was not really a dealer in barometers, the officer sent him to the prison of B —— , a small town in the neighbourhood, where our hero arrived at about three o’clock in the morning, beside himself with rage and half dead with exhaustion.

Fabrizio, astonished at first, then furious, understanding absolutely nothing of what was happening to him, spent thirty-three long days in this wretched prison; he wrote letter after letter to the town commandant, and it was the gaoler’s wife, a handsome Fleming of six-and-thirty, who undertook to deliver them. But as she had no wish to see so nice-looking a boy shot, and as moreover he paid well, she put all these letters without fail in the fire. Late in the evening, she would deign to come in and listen to the prisoner’s complaints; she had told her husband that the young greenhorn had money, after which the prudent gaoler allowed her a free hand. She availed herself of this licence and received several gold napoleons in return, for the adjudant had taken only the horses, and the officer of gendarmerie had confiscated nothing at all. One afternoon in the month of June, Fabrizio heard a violent cannonade at some distance. So they were fighting at last! His heart leaped with impatience. He heard also a great deal of noise in the town; as a matter of fact a big movement of troops was being effected; three divisions were passing through B —— . When, about eleven o’clock, the gaoler’s wife came in to share his griefs, Fabrizio was even more friendly than usual; then, seizing hold of her hands:

“Get me out of here; I swear on my honour to return to prison as soon as they have stopped fighting.”

“Stuff and nonsense! Have you the quibus?” He seemed worried; he did not understand the word quibus. The gaoler’s wife, noticing his dismay, decided that he must be in low water, and instead of talking in gold napoleons as she had intended talked now only in francs.

“Listen,” she said to him, “if you can put down a hundred francs, I will place a double napoleon on each eye of the corporal who comes to change the guard during the night. He won’t be able to see you breaking out of prison, and if his regiment is to march tomorrow he will accept.”

The bargain was soon struck. The gaoler’s wife even consented to hide Fabrizio in her own room, from which he could more easily make his escape in the morning.

Next day, before dawn, the woman, who was quite moved, said to Fabrizio:

“My dear boy, you are still far too young for that dirty trade; take my advice, don’t go back to it.”

“What!” stammered Fabrizio, “is it a crime then to wish to defend one’s country?”

“Enough said. Always remember that I saved your life; your case was clear, you would have been shot. But don’t say a word to anyone, or you will lose my husband and me our job; and whatever you do, don’t go about repeating that silly tale about being a gentleman from Milan disguised as a dealer in barometers, it’s too stupid. Listen to me now, I’m going to give you the uniform of a hussar who died the other day in the prison; open your mouth as little as you possibly can; but if a serjeant or an officer asks you questions so that you have to answer, say that you’ve been lying ill in the house of a peasant who took you in out of charity when you were shivering with fever in a ditch by the roadside. If that does not satisfy them, you can add that you are going back to your regiment. They may perhaps arrest you because of your accent; then say that you were born in Piedmont, that you’re a conscript who was left in France last year, and all that sort of thing.”

For the first time, after thirty-three days of blind fury, Fabrizio grasped the clue to all that had happened. They took him for a spy. He argued with the

gaoler's wife, who, that morning, was most affectionate; and finally, while armed with a needle she was taking in the hussar's uniform to fit him, he told his whole story in so many words to the astonished woman. For an instant she believed him; he had so innocent an air, and looked so nice dressed as a hussar.

"Since you have such a desire to fight," she said to him at length half convinced, "what you ought to have done as soon as you reached Paris was to enlist in a regiment. If you had paid for a serjeant's drink, the whole thing would have been settled." The gaoler's wife added much good advice for the future, and finally, at the first streak of dawn, let Fabrizio out of the house, after making him swear a hundred times over that he would never mention her name, whatever happened. As soon as Fabrizio had left the little town, marching boldly with the hussar's sabre under his arm, he was seized by a scruple. "Here I am," he said to himself, "with the clothes and the marching orders of a hussar who died in prison, where he was sent, they say, for stealing a cow and some silver plate! I have, so to speak, inherited his identity . . . and without wishing it or expecting it in any way! Beware of prison! The omen is clear, I shall have much to suffer from prisons!"

Not an hour had passed since Fabrizio's parting from his benefactress when the rain began to fall with such violence that the new hussar was barely able to get along, hampered by a pair of heavy boots which had not been made for him. Meeting a peasant mounted upon a sorry horse, he bought the animal, explaining by signs what he wanted; the gaoler's wife had recommended him to speak as little as possible, in view of his accent.

That day the army, which had just won the battle of Ligny, was marching straight on Brussels. It was the eve of the battle of Waterloo. Towards midday, the rain still continuing to fall in torrents, Fabrizio heard the sound of the guns; this joy made him completely oblivious of the fearful moments of despair in which so unjust an imprisonment had plunged him. He rode on until late at night, and, as he was beginning to have a little common sense, went to seek shelter in a peasant's house a long way from the road. This peasant wept and pretended that everything had been taken from him; Fabrizio gave him a crown, and he found some . barley. "My horse is no beauty," Fabrizio said to himself, "but that makes no difference, he may easily take the fancy of some adjutant," and he went to lie down in the stable

by its side. An hour before dawn Fabrizio was on the road, and, by copious endearments, succeeded in making his horse trot. About five o'clock, he heard the cannonade: it was the preliminaries of Waterloo.

CHAPTER THREE

Fabrizio soon came upon some vivandières, and the extreme gratitude that he felt for the gaoler's wife of B —— impelled him to address them; he asked one of them where he would find the 4th Hussar Regiment, to which he belonged.

"You would do just as well not to be in such a hurry, young soldier," said the cantinière, touched by Fabrizio's pallor and glowing eyes. "Your wrist is not strong enough yet for the sabre-thrusts they'll be giving today. If you had a musket, I don't say, maybe you could let off your round as well as any of them."

This advice displeased Fabrizio; but however much he urged on his horse, he could go no faster than the cantinière in her cart. Every now and then the sound of the guns seemed to come nearer and prevented them from hearing each other speak, for Fabrizio was so beside himself with enthusiasm and delight that he had renewed the conversation. Every word uttered by the cantinière intensified his happiness by making him understand it. With the exception of his real name and his escape from prison, he ended by confiding everything to this woman who seemed such a good soul. She was greatly surprised and understood nothing at all of what this handsome young soldier was telling her.

"I see what it is," she exclaimed at length with an air of triumph. "You're a young gentleman who has fallen in love with the wife of some captain in the 4th Hussars. Your mistress will have made you a present of the uniform you're wearing, and you're going after her. As sure as God's in heaven, you've never been a soldier; but, like the brave boy you are, seeing your regiment's under fire, you want to be there too, and not let them think you a chicken."

Fabrizio agreed with everything; it was his only way of procuring good advice. "I know nothing of the ways of these French people," he said to

himself, “and if I am not guided by someone I shall find myself being put in prison again, and they’ll steal my horse.”

“First of all, my boy,” said the cantinière, who was becoming more and more of a friend to him, “confess that you’re not one-and-twenty: at the very most you might be seventeen.”

This was the truth, and Fabrizio admitted as much with good grace.

“Then, you aren’t even a conscript; it’s simply because of Madame’s pretty face that you’re going to get your bones broken. Plague it, she can’t be particular. If you’ve still got some of the yellow-boys she sent you, you must first of all buy yourself another horse; look how your screw pricks up his ears when the guns sound at all near; that’s a peasant’s horse, and will be the death of you as soon as you reach the line. That white smoke you see over there above the hedge, that’s the infantry firing, my boy. So prepare for a fine fright when you hear the bullets whistling over you. You’ll do as well to eat a bit while there’s still time.”

Fabrizio followed this advice and, presenting a napoleon to the vivandière, asked her to accept payment.

“It makes one weep to see him!” cried the woman; “the poor child doesn’t even know how to spend his money! It would be no more than you deserve if I pocketed your napoleon and put Cocotte into a trot; damned if your screw could catch me up. What would you do, stupid, if you saw me go off? Bear in mind, when the brute growls, never to show your gold. Here,” she went on, “here’s 18 francs, 50 centimes, and your breakfast costs you 30 sous. Now, we shall soon have some horses for sale. If the beast is a small one, you’ll give ten francs, and, in any case, never more than twenty, not if it was the horse of the Four Sons of Aymon.”

The meal finished, the vivandière, who was still haranguing, was interrupted by a woman who had come across the fields and passed them on the road.

“Hallo there, hi!” this woman shouted. “Hallo, Margot! Your 6th Light are over there on the right.”

“I must leave you, my boy,” said the vivandière to our hero; “but really and truly I pity you; I’ve taken quite a fancy to you, upon my word I have. You don’t know a thing about anything, you’re going to get a wipe in the eye, as sure as God’s in heaven! Come along to the 6th Light with me.”

“I quite understand that I know nothing,” Fabrizio told her, “but I want to fight, and I’m determined to go over there towards that white smoke.”

“Look how your horse is twitching his ears! As soon as he gets over there, even if he’s no strength left, he’ll take the bit in his teeth and start galloping, and heaven only knows where he’ll land you. Will you listen to me now? As soon as you get to the troops, pick up a musket and a cartridge pouch, get down among the men and copy what you see them do, exactly the same: But, good heavens, I’ll bet you don’t even know how to open a cartridge.”

Fabrizio, stung to the quick, admitted nevertheless to his new friend that she had guessed aright.

“Poor boy! He’ll be killed straight away; sure as God! It won’t take long. You’ve got to come with me, absolutely,” went on the cantinière in a tone of authority.

“But I want to fight.”

“You shall fight too; why, the 6th Light are famous fighters, and there’s fighting enough today for everyone.”

“But shall we come soon to the regiment?”

“In a quarter of an hour at the most.”

“With this honest woman’s recommendation,” Fabrizio told himself, “my ignorance of everything won’t make them take me for a spy, and I shall have a chance of fighting.” At this moment the noise of the guns redoubled, each explosion coming straight on top of the last. “It’s like a Rosary,” said Fabrizio.

“We’re beginning to hear the infantry fire now,” said the vivandière, whipping up her little horse, which seemed quite excited by the firing.

The cantinière turned to the right and took a side road that ran through the fields; there was a foot of mud in it; the little cart seemed about to be stuck fast: Fabrizio pushed the wheel. His horse fell twice; presently the road, though with less water on it, was nothing more than a bridle path through the grass. Fabrizio had not gone five hundred yards when his nag stopped short: it was a corpse, lying across the path, which terrified horse and rider alike.

Fabrizio's face, pale enough by nature, assumed a markedly green tinge; the cantinière, after looking at the dead man, said, as though speaking to herself: "That's not one of our Division." Then, raising her eyes to our hero, she burst out laughing.

"Aha, my boy! There's a titbit for you!" Fabrizio sat frozen. What struck him most of all was the dirtiness of the feet of this corpse which had already been stripped of its shoes and left with nothing but an old pair of trousers all clotted with blood.

"Come nearer," the cantinière ordered him, "get off your horse, you'll have to get accustomed to them; look," she cried, "he's stopped one in the head."

A bullet, entering on one side of the nose, had gone out at the opposite temple, and disfigured the corpse in a hideous fashion. It lay with one eye still open.

"Get off your horse then, lad," said the cantinière, "and give him a shake of the hand to see if he'll return it."

Without hesitation, although ready to yield up his soul with disgust, Fabrizio flung himself from his horse and took the hand of the corpse which he shook vigorously; then he stood still as though paralysed. He felt that he had not the strength to mount again. What horrified him more than anything was that open eye.

"The vivandière will think me a coward," he said to himself bitterly. But he felt the impossibility of making any movement; he would have fallen. It was a frightful moment; Fabrizio was on the point of being physically sick. The vivandière noticed this, jumped lightly down from her little carriage, and held out to him, without saying a word, a glass of brandy which he

swallowed at a gulp; he was able to mount his screw, and continued on his way without speaking. The vivandière looked at him now and again from the corner of her eye.

“You shall fight tomorrow, my boy,” she said at length; “today you’re going to stop with me. You can see now that you’ve got to learn the business before you can become a soldier.”

“On the contrary, I want to start fighting at once,” exclaimed our hero with a sombre air which seemed to the vivandière to augur well. The noise of the guns grew twice as loud and seemed to be coming nearer. The explosions began to form a continuous bass; there was no interval between one and the next, and above this running bass, which suggested the roar of a torrent in the distance, they could make out quite plainly the rattle of musketry.

At this point the road dived down into a clump of trees. The vivandière saw three or four soldiers of our army who were coming towards her as fast as their legs would carry them; she jumped nimbly down from her cart and ran into cover fifteen or twenty paces from the road. She hid herself in a hole which had been left where a big tree had recently been uprooted. “Now,” thought Fabrizio, “we shall see whether I am a coward!” He stopped by the side of the little cart which the woman had abandoned, and drew his sabre. The soldiers paid no attention to him and passed at a run along the wood, to the left of the road.

“They’re ours,” said the vivandière calmly, as she came back, quite breathless, to her little cart. . . . “If your horse was capable of galloping, I should say: push ahead as far as the end of the wood, and see if there’s anyone on the plain.” Fabrizio did not wait to be told twice, he tore off a branch from a poplar, stripped it and started to lash his horse with all his might; the animal broke into a gallop for a moment, then fell back into its regular slow trot. The vivandière had put her horse into a gallop. “Stop, will you, stop!” she called after Fabrizio. Presently both were clear of the wood. Coming to the edge of the plain, they heard a terrifying din, guns and muskets thundered on every side, right, left, behind them. And as the clump of trees from which they emerged grew on a mound rising nine or ten feet above the plain, they could see fairly well a corner of the battle; but still there was no one to be seen in the meadow beyond the wood. This meadow

was bordered, half a mile away, by a long row of willows, very bushy; above the willows appeared a white smoke which now and again rose eddying into the sky.

“If I only knew where the regiment was,” said the cantinière, in some embarrassment. “It won’t do to go straight ahead over this big field. By the way,” she said to Fabrizio, “if you see one of the enemy, stick him with the point of your sabre, don’t play about with the blade.”

At this moment, the cantinière caught sight of the four soldiers whom we mentioned a little way back; they were coming out of the wood on to the plain to the left of the road. One of them was on horseback.

“There you are,” she said to Fabrizio. “Hallo there!” she called to the mounted man, “come over here and have a glass of brandy.” The soldiers approached.

“Where are the 6th Light?” she shouted.

“Over there, five minutes away, across that canal that runs along by the willows; why, Colonel Macon has just been killed.”

“Will you take five francs for your horse, you?”

“Five francs! That’s not a bad one, ma! An officer’s horse I can sell in ten minutes for five napoleons.”

“Give me one of your napoleons,” said the vivandière to Fabrizio. Then going up to the mounted soldier: “Get off, quickly,” she said to him, “here’s your napoleon.”

The soldier dismounted, Fabrizio sprang gaily on to the saddle, the vivandière unstrapped the little portmanteau which was on his old horse.

“Come and help me, all of you!” she said to the soldiers, “is that the way you leave a lady to do the work?”

But no sooner had the captured horse felt the weight of the portmanteau than he began to rear, and Fabrizio, who was an excellent horseman, had to use

all his strength to hold him.

“A good sign!” said the vivandière, “the gentleman is not accustomed to being tickled by portmanteaus.”

“A general’s horse,” cried the man who had sold it, “a horse that’s worth ten napoleons if it’s worth a Hard.”

“Here are twenty francs,” said Fabrizio, who could not contain himself for joy at feeling between his legs a horse that could really move.

At that moment a shot struck the line of willows, through which it passed obliquely, and Fabrizio had the curious spectacle of all those little branches flying this way and that as though mown down by a stroke of the scythe.

“Look, there’s the brute advancing,” the soldier said to him as he took the twenty francs. It was now about two o’clock.

Fabrizio was still under the spell of this strange spectacle when a party of generals, followed by a score of hussars, passed at a gallop across one corner of the huge field on the edge of which he had halted: his horse neighed, reared several times in succession, then began violently tugging the bridle that was holding him. “All right, then,” Fabrizio said to himself.

The horse, left to his own devices, dashed off hell for leather to join the escort that was following the generals.

Fabrizio counted four gold-laced hats. A quarter of an hour later, from a few words said by one hussar to the next, Fabrizio gathered that one of these generals was the famous Marshal Ney. His happiness knew no bounds; only he had no way of telling which of the four generals was Marshal Ney; he would have given everything in the world to know, but he remembered that he had been told not to speak. The escort halted, having to cross a wide ditch left full of water by the rain overnight; it was fringed with tall trees and formed the left-hand boundary of the field at the entrance to which Fabrizio had bought the horse. Almost all the hussars had dismounted; the bank of the ditch was steep and very slippery and the water lay quite three or four feet below the level of the field. Fabrizio, distracted with joy, was thinking more of Marshal Ney and of glory than of his horse, which, being highly excited,

jumped into the canal, thus splashing the water up to a considerable height. One of the generals was soaked to the skin by the sheet of water, and cried with an oath: “Damn the f —— brute!” Fabrizio felt deeply hurt by this insult. “Can I ask him to apologise?” he wondered. Meanwhile, to prove that he was not so clumsy after all, he set his horse to climb the opposite bank of the ditch; but it rose straight up and was five or six feet high. He had to abandon the attempt; then he rode up stream, his horse being up to its head in water, and at last found a sort of drinking-place. By this gentle slope he was easily able to reach the field on the other side of the canal. He was the first man of the escort to appear there; he started to trot proudly down the bank; below him, in the canal, the hussars were splashing about, somewhat embarrassed by their position, for in many places the water was five feet deep. Two or three horses took fright and began to swim, making an appalling mess. A serjeant noticed the manœuvre that this youngster, who looked so very unlike a soldier, had just carried out.

“Up here! There is a watering-place on the left!” he shouted, and in time they all crossed.

On reaching the farther bank, Fabrizio had found the generals there by themselves; the noise of the guns seemed to him to have doubled; and it was all he could do to hear the general whom he had given such a good soaking and who now shouted in his ear:

“Where did you get that horse?”

Fabrizio was so much upset that he answered in Italian:

“L’ho comprato poco fa.” (I bought it just now.)

“What’s that you say?” cried the general.

But the din at that moment became so terrific that Fabrizio could not answer him. We must admit that our hero was very little of a hero at that moment. However, fear came to him only as a secondary consideration; he was principally shocked by the noise, which hurt his ears. The escort broke into a gallop; they crossed a large batch of tilled land which lay beyond the canal. And this field was strewn with dead.

“Red-coats! red-coats!” the hussars of the escort exclaimed joyfully, and at first Fabrizio did not understand; then he noticed that as a matter of fact almost all these bodies wore red uniforms. One detail made him shudder with horror; he observed that many of these unfortunate red-coats were still alive; they were calling out, evidently asking for help, and no one stopped to give it them. Our hero, being most humane, took every possible care that his horse should not tread upon any of the red-coats. The escort halted; Fabrizio, who was not paying sufficient attention to his military duty, galloped on, his eyes fixed on a wounded wretch in front of him.

“Will you halt, you young fool!” the serjeant shouted after him. Fabrizio discovered that he was twenty paces on the generals’ right front, and precisely in the direction in which they were gazing through their glasses. As he came back to take his place behind the other hussars, who had halted a few paces in rear of them, he noticed the biggest of these generals, who was speaking to his neighbour, a general also, in a tone of authority and almost of reprimand; he was swearing. Fabrizio could not contain his curiosity; and, in spite of the warning not to speak, given him by his friend the gaoler’s wife, he composed a short sentence in good French, quite correct, and said to his neighbour:

“Who is that general who is chewing up the one next to him?”

“Gad, it’s the Marshal!”

“What Marshal?”

“Marshal Ney, you fool! I say, where have you been serving?”

Fabrizio, although highly susceptible, had no thought of resenting this insult; he was studying, lost in childish admiration, the famous Prince de la Moskowa, the “Bravest of the Brave.”

Suddenly they all moved off at full gallop. A few minutes later Fabrizio saw, twenty paces ahead of him, a ploughed field the surface of which was moving in a singular fashion. The furrows were full of water and the soil, very damp, which formed the ridges between these furrows kept flying off in little black lumps three or four feet into the air. Fabrizio noticed as he passed

this curious effect; then his thoughts turned to dreaming of the Marshal and his glory. He heard a sharp cry close to him; two hussars fell struck by shot; and, when he looked back at them, they were already twenty paces behind the escort. What seemed to him horrible was a horse streaming with blood that was struggling on the ploughed land, its hooves caught in its own entrails; it was trying to follow the others: its blood ran down into the mire.

“Ah! So I am under fire at last!” he said to himself. “I have seen shots fired!” he repeated with a sense of satisfaction. “Now I am a real soldier.” At that moment, the escort began to go hell for leather, and our hero realised that it was shot from the guns that was making the earth fly up all round him. He looked vainly in the direction from which the balls were coming, he saw the white smoke of the battery at an enormous distance, and, in the thick of the steady and continuous rumble produced by the artillery fire, he seemed to hear shots discharged much closer at hand: he could not understand in the least what was happening.

At that moment, the generals and their escort dropped into a little road filled with water which ran five feet below the level of the fields.

The Marshal halted and looked again through his glasses. Fabrizio, this time, could examine him at his leisure. He found him to be very fair, with a big red face. “We don’t have any faces like that in Italy,” he said to himself. “With my pale cheeks and chestnut hair, I shall never look like that,” he added despondently. To him these words implied: “I shall never be a hero.” He looked at the hussars; with a solitary exception, all of them had yellow moustaches. If Fabrizio was studying the hussars of the escort, they were all studying him as well. Their stare made him blush, and, to get rid of his embarrassment, he turned his head towards the enemy. They consisted of widely extended lines of men in red, but, what greatly surprised him, these men seemed to be quite minute. Their long files, which were regiments or divisions, appeared no taller than hedges. A line of red cavalry were trotting in the direction of the sunken road along which the Marshal and his escort had begun to move at a walk, splashing through the mud. The smoke made it impossible to distinguish anything in the direction in which they were advancing; now and then one saw men moving at a gallop against this background of white smoke.

Suddenly, from the direction of the enemy, Fabrizio saw four men approaching hell for leather. “Ah! We are attacked,” he said to himself; then he saw two of these men speak to the Marshal. One of the generals on the latter’s staff set off at a gallop towards the enemy, followed by two hussars of the escort and by the four men who had just come up. After a little canal which they all crossed, Fabrizio found himself riding beside a serjeant who seemed a good-natured fellow. “I must speak to this one,” he said to himself, “then perhaps they’ll stop staring at me.” He thought for a long time.

“Sir, this is the first time that I have been present at a battle,” he said at length to the serjeant. “But is this a real battle?”

“Something like. But who are you?”

“I am the brother of a captain’s wife.”

“And what is he called, your captain?”

Our hero was terribly embarrassed; he had never anticipated this question. Fortunately, the Marshal and his escort broke into a gallop. “What French name shall I say?” he wondered. At last he remembered the name of the innkeeper with whom he had lodged in Paris; he brought his horse up to the serjeant’s, and shouted to him at the top of his voice:

“Captain Meunier!” The other, not hearing properly in the roar of the guns, replied: “Oh, Captain Teulier? Well, he’s been killed.” “Splendid,” thought Fabrizio. “Captain Teulier; I must look sad.”

“Good God!” he cried; and assumed a piteous mien. They had left the sunken road and were crossing a small meadow, they were going hell for leather, shots were coming over again, the Marshal headed for a division of cavalry. The escort found themselves surrounded by dead and wounded men; but this sight had already ceased to make any impression on our hero; he had other things to think of.

While the escort was halted, he caught sight of the little cart of a cantinière, and his affection for this honourable corps sweeping aside every other consideration, set off at a gallop to join her.

“Stay where you are, curse you,” the serjeant shouted after him.

“What can he do to me here?” thought Fabrizio, and he continued to gallop towards the cantinière. When he put spurs to his horse, he had had some hope that it might be his good cantinière of the morning; the horse and the little cart bore a strong resemblance, but their owner was quite different, and our hero thought her appearance most forbidding. As he came up to her, Fabrizio heard her say: “And he was such a fine-looking man, too!” A very ugly sight awaited the new recruit; they were sawing off a cuirassier’s leg at the thigh, a handsome young fellow of five feet ten. Fabrizio shut his eyes and drank four glasses of brandy straight off.

“How you do go for it, you boozer!” cried the cantinière. The brandy gave him an idea: “I must buy the goodwill of my comrades, the hussars of the escort.”

“Give me the rest of the bottle,” he said to the vivandière.

“What do you mean,” was her answer, “what’s left there costs ten francs, on a day like this.”

As he rejoined the escort at a gallop:

“Ah! You’re bringing us a drop of drink,” cried the serjeant. “That was why you deserted, was it? Hand it over.”

The bottle went round, the last man to take it flung it in the air after drinking. “Thank you, chum!” he cried to Fabrizio. All eyes were fastened on him kindly. This friendly gaze lifted a hundredweight from Fabrizio’s heart; it was one of those hearts of too delicate tissue which require the friendship of those around it. So at last he had ceased to be looked at askance by his comrades; there was a bond between them! Fabrizio breathed a deep sigh of relief, then in a bold voice said to the serjeant:

“And if Captain Teulier has been killed, where shall I find my sister?” He fancied himself a little Machiavelli to be saying Teulier so naturally instead of Meunier.

“That’s what you’ll find out to-night,” was the serjeant’s reply.

The escort moved on again and made for some divisions of infantry. Fabrizio felt quite drunk; he had taken too much brandy, he was rolling slightly in his saddle: he remembered most opportunely a favourite saying of his mother's coachman: "When you've been lifting your elbow, look straight between your horse's ears, and do what the man next you does." The Marshal stopped for some time beside a number of cavalry units which he ordered to charge; but for an hour or two our hero was barely conscious of what was going on round about him. He was feeling extremely tired, and when his horse galloped he fell back on the saddle like a lump of lead.

Suddenly the serjeant called out to his men: "Don't you see the Emperor, curse you!" Whereupon the escort shouted: "Vive l'Empereur!" at the top of their voices. It may be imagined that our hero stared till his eyes started out of his head, but all he saw was some generals galloping, also followed by an escort. The long floating plumes of horsehair which the dragoons of the bodyguard wore on their helmets prevented him from distinguishing their faces. "So I have missed seeing the Emperor on a field of battle, all because of those cursed glasses of brandy!" This reflexion brought him back to his senses.

They went down into a road filled with water, the horses wished to drink.

"So that was the Emperor who went past then?" he asked the man next to him.

"Why, surely, the one with no braid on his coat. How is it you didn't see him?" his comrade answered kindly. Fabrizio felt a strong desire to gallop after the Emperor's escort and embody himself in it. What a joy to go really to war in the train of that hero! It was for that that he had come to France. "I am quite at liberty to do it," he said to himself, "for after all I have no other reason for being where I am but the will of my horse, which started galloping after these generals."

What made Fabrizio decide to stay where he was was that the hussars, his new comrades, seemed so friendly towards him; he began to imagine himself the intimate friend of all the troopers with whom he had been galloping for the last few hours. He saw arise between them and himself that noble friendship of the heroes of Tasso and Ariosto. If he were to attach himself to

the Emperor's escort, there would be fresh acquaintances to be made, perhaps they would look at him askance, for these other horsemen were dragoons, and he was wearing the hussar uniform like all the rest that were following the Marshal. The way in which they now looked at him set our hero on a pinnacle of happiness; he would have done anything in the world for his comrades; his mind and soul were in the clouds. Everything seemed to have assumed a new aspect now that he was among friends; he was dying to ask them various questions. "But I am still a little drunk," he said to himself, "I must bear in mind what the gaoler's wife told me." He noticed on leaving the sunken road that the escort was no longer with Marshal Ney; the general whom they were following was tall and thin, with a dry face and an awe-inspiring eye.

This general was none other than Comte d'A —— , the Lieutenant Robert of the 15th of May, 1796. How delighted he would have been to meet Fabrizio del Dongo!

It was already some time since Fabrizio had noticed the earth flying off in black crumbs on being struck by shot; they came in rear of a regiment of cuirassiers, he could hear distinctly the rattle of the grapeshot against their breastplates, and saw several men fall.

The sun was now very low and had begun to set when the escort, emerging from a sunken road, mounted a little bank three or four feet high to enter a ploughed field. Fabrizio heard an odd little sound quite close to him: he turned his head, four men had fallen with their horses; the general himself had been unseated, but picked himself up, covered in blood. Fabrizio looked at the hussars who were lying on the ground: three of them were still making convulsive movements, the fourth cried: "Pull me out!" The serjeant and two or three men had dismounted to assist the general, who, leaning upon his aide-decamp, was attempting to walk a few. steps; he was trying to get away from his horse, which lay on the ground struggling and kicking out madly.

The serjeant came up to Fabrizio. At that moment our hero heard a voice say behind him and quite close to his ear: "This is the only one that can still gallop." He felt himself seized by the feet; they were taken out of the stirrups at the same time as someone caught him underneath the arms; he was lifted

over his horse's tail and then allowed to slip to the ground, where he landed sitting.

The aide-decamp took Fabrizio's horse by the bridle; the general, with the help of the serjeant, mounted and rode off at a gallop; he was quickly followed by the six men who were left of the escort. Fabrizio rose up in a fury, and began to run after them shouting: "Ladri! Ladri!" (Thieves! Thieves!) It was an amusing experience to run after horse-stealers across a battlefield.

The escort and the general, Comte d'A —— , disappeared presently behind a row of willows. Fabrizio, blind with rage, also arrived at this line of willows; he found himself brought to a halt by a canal of considerable depth which he crossed. Then, on reaching the other side, he began swearing again as he saw once more, but far away in the distance, the general and his escort vanishing among the trees. "Thieves! Thieves!" he cried, in French this time. In desperation, not so much at the loss of his horse as at the treachery to himself, he let himself sink down on the side of the ditch, tired out and dying of hunger. If his fine horse had been taken from him by the enemy, he would have thought no more about it; but to see himself betrayed and robbed by that serjeant whom he liked so much and by those hussars whom he regarded as brothers! That was what broke his heart. He could find no consolation for so great an infamy, and, leaning his back against a willow, began to shed hot tears. He abandoned one by one all those beautiful dreams of a chivalrous and sublime friendship, like that of the heroes of the Gerusalemme Liberata. To see death come to one was nothing, surrounded by heroic and tender hearts, by noble friends who clasp one by the hand as one yields one's dying breath! But to retain one's enthusiasm surrounded by a pack of vile scoundrels! Like all angry men Fabrizio exaggerated. After a quarter of an hour of this melting mood, he noticed that the guns were beginning to range on the row of trees in the shade of which he sat meditating. He rose and tried to find his bearings. He scanned those fields bounded by a wide canal and the row of pollard willows: he thought he knew where he was. He saw a body of infantry crossing the ditch and marching over the fields, a quarter of a league in front of him. "I was just falling asleep," he said to himself; "I must see that I'm not taken prisoner." And he put his best foot foremost. As he advanced, his mind was set at rest; he recognized the uniforms, the

regiments by which he had been afraid of being cut off were French. He made a right incline so as to join them.

After the moral anguish of having been so shamefully betrayed and robbed, there came another which, at every moment, made itself felt more keenly; he was dying of hunger. It was therefore with infinite joy that after having walked, or rather run, for ten minutes, he saw that the column of infantry, which also had been moving very rapidly, was halting to take up a position. A few minutes later, he was among the nearest of the soldiers.

“Friends, could you sell me a mouthful of bread?” “I say, here’s a fellow who thinks we’re bakers!” This harsh utterance and the general guffaw that followed it had a crushing effect on Fabrizio. So war was no longer that noble and universal uplifting of souls athirst for glory which he had imagined it to be from Napoleon’s proclamations! He sat down, or rather let himself fall on the grass; he turned very pale. The soldier who had spoken to him, and who had stopped ten paces off to clean the lock of his musket with his handkerchief, came nearer and flung him a lump of bread; then, seeing that he did not pick it up, broke off a piece which he put in our hero’s mouth. Fabrizio opened his eyes, and ate the bread without having the strength to speak. When at length he looked round for the soldier to pay him, he found himself alone; the men nearest to him were a hundred yards off and were marching. Mechanically he rose and followed them. He entered a wood; he was dropping with exhaustion, and already had begun to look round for a comfortable resting-place; but what was his delight on recognising first of all the horse, then the cart, and finally the cantinière of that morning! She ran to him and was frightened by his appearance.

“Still going, my boy,” she said to him; “you’re wounded then? And where’s your fine horse?” So saying she led him towards the cart, upon which she made him climb, supporting him under the arms. No sooner was he in the cart than our hero, utterly worn out, fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER FOUR

Nothing could awaken him, neither the muskets fired close to the cart nor the trot of the horse which the cantinière was flogging with all her might. The regiment, attacked unexpectedly by swarms of Prussian cavalry, after imagining all day that they were winning the battle, was beating a retreat or rather fleeing in the direction of France.

The colonel, a handsome young man, well turned out, who had succeeded Macon, was sabred; the battalion commander who took his place, an old man with white hair, ordered the regiment to halt. “Damn you,” he cried to his men, “in the days of the Republic we waited till we were forced by the enemy before running away. Defend every inch of ground, and get yourselves killed!” he shouted, and swore at them. “It is the soil of the Fatherland that these Prussians want to invade now!”

The little cart halted; Fabrizio awoke with a start. The sun had set some time back; he was quite astonished to see that it was almost night. The troops were running in all directions in a confusion which greatly surprised our hero; they looked shame-faced, he thought.

“What is happening?” he asked the cantinière.

“Nothing at all. Only that we’re in the soup, my boy; it’s the Prussian cavalry mowing us down, that’s all. The idiot of a general thought at first they were our men. Come, quick, help me to mend Cocotte’s trace; it’s broken.”

Several shots were fired ten yards off. Our hero, cool and composed, said to himself: “But really, I haven’t fought at all, the whole day; I have only escorted a general. — I must go and fight,” he said to the cantinière.

“Keep calm, you shall fight, and more than you want! We’re done for.”

“Aubry, my lad,” she called out to a passing corporal, “keep an eye on the little cart now and then.”

“Are you going to fight?” Fabrizio asked Aubry.

“Oh, no, I’m putting my pumps on to go to a dance!”

“I shall follow you.”

“I tell you, he’s all right, the little hussar,” cried the cantinière. “The young gentleman has a stout heart.” Corporal Aubry marched on without saying a word. Eight or nine soldiers ran up and joined him; he led them behind a big oak surrounded by brambles. On reaching it he posted them along the edge of the wood, still without uttering a word, on a widely extended front, each man being at least ten paces from the next.

“Now then, you men,” said the corporal, opening his mouth for the first time, “don’t fire till I give the order: remember you’ve only got three rounds each.”

“Why, what is happening?” Fabrizio wondered. At length, when he found himself alone with the corporal, he said to him: “I have no musket.”

“Will you hold your tongue? Go forward there: fifty paces in front of the wood you’ll find one of the poor fellows of the Regiment who’ve been sabred; you will take his cartridge-pouch and his musket. Don’t strip a wounded man, though; take the pouch and musket from one who’s properly dead, and hurry up or you’ll be shot in the back by our fellows.” Fabrizio set off at a run and returned the next minute with a musket and a pouch.

“Load your musket and stick yourself behind this tree, and whatever you do don’t fire till you get the order from me. . . . Great God in heaven!” the corporal broke off, “he doesn’t even know how to load!” He helped Fabrizio to do this while going on with his instructions. “If one of the enemy’s cavalry gallops at you to cut you down, dodge round your tree and don’t fire till he’s within three paces: wait till your bayonet’s practically touching his uniform.

“Throw that great sabre away,” cried the corporal. “Good God, do you want it to trip you up? Fine sort of soldiers they’re sending us these days!” As he spoke he himself took hold of the sabre which he flung angrily away.

“You there, wipe the flint of your musket with your handkerchief. Have you never fired a musket?”

“I am a hunter.”

“Thank God for that!” went on the corporal with a loud sigh. “Whatever you do, don’t fire till I give the order.” And he moved away.

Fabrizio was supremely happy. “Now I’m going to do some real fighting,” he said to himself, “and kill one of the enemy. This morning they were sending cannonballs over, and I did nothing but expose myself and risk getting killed; that’s a fool’s game.” He gazed all round him with extreme curiosity. Presently he heard seven or eight shots fired quite close at hand. But receiving no order to fire he stood quietly behind his tree. It was almost night; he felt he was in a look-out, bear-shooting, on the mountain of Tramezzina, above Grianta. A hunter’s idea came to him: he took a cartridge from his pouch and removed the ball. “If I see him,” he said, “it won’t do to miss him,” and he slipped this second ball into the barrel of his musket. He heard shots fired close to his tree; at the same moment he saw a horseman in blue pass in front of him at a gallop, going from right to left. “It is more than three paces,” he said to himself, “but at that range I am certain of my mark.” He kept the trooper carefully sighted with his musket and finally pressed the trigger: the trooper fell with his horse. Our hero imagined he was stalking game: he ran joyfully out to collect his bag. He was actually touching the man, who appeared to him to be dying, when, with incredible speed, two Prussian troopers charged down on him to sabre him. Fabrizio dashed back as fast as he could go to the wood; to gain speed he flung his musket away. The Prussian troopers were not more than three paces from him when he reached another plantation of young oaks, as thick as his arm and quite upright, which fringed the wood. These little oaks delayed the horsemen for a moment, but they passed them and continued their pursuit of Fabrizio along a clearing. Once again they were just overtaking him when he slipped in among seven or eight big trees. At that moment his face was almost scorched by the flame of five or six musket shots fired from in front of him.

He ducked his head; when he raised it again he found himself face to face with the corporal.

“Did you kill your man?” Corporal Aubry asked him.

“Yes; but I’ve lost my musket.”

“It’s not muskets we’re short of. You’re not a bad b —— — ; though you do look as green as a cabbage you’ve won the day all right, and these men here have just missed the two who were chasing you and coming straight at them. I didn’t see them myself. What we’ve got to do now is to get away at the double; the Regiment must be half a mile off, and there’s a bit of a field to cross, too, where we may find ourselves surrounded.”

As he spoke, the corporal marched off at a brisk pace at the head of his ten men. Two hundred yards farther on, as they entered the little field he had mentioned, they came upon a wounded general who was being carried by his aide-decamp and an orderly.

“Give me four of your men,” he said to the corporal in a faint voice, “I’ve got to be carried to the ambulance; my leg is shattered.”

“Go and f —— yourself!” replied the corporal, “you and all your generals. You’ve all of you betrayed the Emperor today.”

“What,” said the general, furious, “you dispute my orders. Do you know that I am General Comte B —— , commanding your Division,” and so on. He waxed rhetorical. The aide-decamp flung himself on the men. The corporal gave him a thrust in the arm with his bayonet, then made off with his party at the double. “I wish they were all in your boat,” he repeated with an oath; “I’d shatter their arms and legs for them. A pack of puppies! All of them bought by the Bourbons, to betray the Emperor!” Fabrizio listened with a thrill of horror to this frightful accusation.

About ten o’clock that night the little party overtook their regiment on the outskirts of a large village which divided the road into several very narrow streets; but Fabrizio noticed that Corporal Aubry avoided speaking to any of the officers. “We can’t get on,” he called to his men. All these streets were blocked with infantry, cavalry, and, worst of all, by the limbers and wagons

of the artillery. The corporal tried three of these streets in turn; after advancing twenty yards he was obliged to halt. Everyone was swearing and losing his temper.

“Some traitor in command here, too!” cried the corporal: “if the enemy has the sense to surround the village, we shall all be caught like rats in a trap. Follow me, you.” Fabrizio looked round; there were only six men left with the corporal. Through a big gate which stood open they came into a huge courtyard; from this courtyard they passed into a stable, the back door of which let them into a garden. They lost their way for a moment and wandered blindly about. But finally, going through a hedge, they found themselves in a huge field of buckwheat. In less than half an hour, guided by the shouts and confused noises, they had regained the high road on the other side of the village. The ditches on either side of this road were filled with muskets that had been thrown away; Fabrizio selected one: but the road, although very broad, was so blocked with stragglers and transport that in the next half-hour the corporal and Fabrizio had not advanced more than five hundred yards at the most; they were told that this road led to Charleroi. As the village clock struck eleven:

“Let us cut across the fields again,” said the corporal. The little party was reduced now to three men, the corporal and Fabrizio. When they had gone a quarter of a league from the high road: “I’m done,” said one of the soldiers.

“Me, too!” said another.

“That’s good news! We’re all in the same boat,” said the corporal; “but do what I tell you and you’ll get through all right.” His eye fell on five or six trees marking the line of a little ditch in the middle of an immense cornfield. “Make for the trees!” he told his men; “lie down,” he added when they had reached the trees, “and not a sound, remember. But before you go to sleep, who’s got any bread?”

“I have,” said one of the men.

“Give it here,” said the corporal in a tone of authority. He divided the bread into five pieces and took the smallest himself.

“A quarter of an hour before dawn,” he said as he ate it, “you’ll have the enemy’s cavalry on your backs. You’ve got to see you’re not sabred. A man by himself is done for with cavalry after him on these big plains, but five can get away; keep in close touch with me, don’t fire till they’re at close range, and tomorrow evening I’ll undertake to get you to Charleroi.” The corporal roused his men an hour before daybreak and made them recharge their muskets. The noise on the high road still continued; it had gone on all night: it was like the sound of a torrent heard from a long way off.

“They’re like a flock of sheep running away,” said Fabrizio with a guileless air to the corporal.

“Will you shut your mouth, you young fool!” said the corporal, greatly indignant. And the three soldiers who with Fabrizio composed his whole force scowled angrily at our hero as though he had uttered blasphemy. He had insulted the nation.

“That is where their strength lies!” thought our hero. “I noticed it before with the Viceroy at Milan; they are not running away, oh, no! With these Frenchmen you must never speak the truth if it shocks their vanity. But as for their savage scowls, they don’t trouble me, and I must let them understand as much.” They kept on their way, always at an interval of five hundred yards from the torrent of fugitives that covered the high road. A league farther on, the corporal and his party crossed a road running into the high road in which a number of soldiers were lying. Fabrizio purchased a fairly good horse which cost him forty francs, and among all the sabres that had been thrown down everywhere made a careful choice of one that was long and straight. “Since I’m told I’ve got to stick them,” he thought, “this is the best.” Thus equipped, he put his horse into a gallop and soon overtook the corporal who had gone on ahead. He sat up in his stirrups, took hold with his left hand of the scabbard of his straight sabre, and said to the four Frenchmen:

“Those people going along the high road look like a flock of sheep . . . they are running like frightened sheep. . . .”

In spite of his dwelling upon the word sheep, his companions had completely forgotten that it had annoyed them an hour earlier. Here we see

one of the contrasts between the Italian character and the French; the Frenchman is no doubt the happier of the two; he glides lightly over the events of life and bears no malice afterwards.

We shall not attempt to conceal the fact that Fabrizio was highly pleased with himself after using the word sheep. They marched on, talking about nothing in particular. After covering two leagues more, the corporal, still greatly astonished to see no sign of the enemy's cavalry, said to Fabrizio:

"You are our cavalry; gallop over to that farm on the little hill; ask the farmer if he will sell us breakfast: mind you tell him there are only five of us. If he hesitates, put down five francs of your money in advance; but don't be frightened, we'll take the dollar back from him after we've eaten."

Fabrizio looked at the corporal; he saw in his face an imperturbable gravity and really an air of moral superiority; he obeyed. Everything fell out as the commander in chief had anticipated; only, Fabrizio insisted on their not taking back by force the five francs he had given to the farmer.

"The money is mine," he said to his friends; "I'm not paying for you, I'm paying for the oats he's given my horse."

Fabrizio's French accent was so bad that his companions thought they detected in his words a note of superiority; they were keenly annoyed, and from that moment a duel began to take shape in their minds for the end of the day. They found him very different from themselves, which shocked them; Fabrizio, on the contrary, was beginning to feel a warm friendship towards them.

They had marched without saying a word for a couple of hours when the corporal, looking across at the high road, exclaimed in a transport of joy: "There's the Regiment!" They were soon on the road; but, alas, round the eagle were mustered not more than two hundred men. Fabrizio's eye soon caught sight of the vivandière: she was going on foot, her eyes were red and every now and again she burst into tears. Fabrizio looked in vain for the little cart and Cocotte.

“Stripped, ruined, robbed!” cried the vivandière, in answer to our hero’s inquiring glance. He, without a word, got down from his horse, took hold of the bridle and said to the vivandière: “Mount!” She did not have to be told twice.

“Shorten the stirrups for me,” was her only remark.

As soon as she was comfortably in the saddle she began to tell Fabrizio all the disasters of the night. After a narrative of endless length but eagerly drunk in by our hero who, to tell the truth, understood nothing at all of what she said but had a tender feeling for the vivandière, she went on:

“And to think that they were Frenchmen who robbed me, beat me, destroyed me. . . .”

“What! It wasn’t the enemy?” said Fabrizio with an air of innocence which made his grave, pale face look charming.

“What a fool you are, you poor boy!” said the vivandière, smiling through her tears; “but you’re very nice, for all that.”

“And such as he is, he brought down his Prussian properly,” said Corporal Aubry, who, in the general confusion round them, happened to be on the other side of the horse on which the cantinière was sitting. “But he’s proud,” the corporal went on. . . . Fabrizio made an impulsive movement. “And what’s your name?” asked the corporal; “for if there’s a report going in I should like to mention you.”

“I’m called Vasi,” replied Fabrizio, with a curious expression on his face. “Boulot, I mean,” he added, quickly correcting himself.

Boulot was the name of the late possessor of the marching orders which the gaoler’s wife at B —— had given him; on his way from B —— he had studied them carefully, for he was beginning to think a little and was no longer so easily surprised. In addition to the marching orders of Trooper Boulot, he had stowed away in a safe place the precious Italian passport according to which he was entitled to the noble appellation of Vasi, dealer in barometers. When the corporal had charged him with being proud, it had been on the tip of his tongue to retort: “I proud! I, Fabrizio Volterra,

Marchesino del Dongo, who consent to go by the name of a Vasi, dealer in barometers!”

While he was making these reflexions and saying to himself: “I must not forget that I am called B’oulot, or look out for the prison fate threatens me with,” the corporal and the cantinière had been exchanging a few words with regard to him.

“Don’t say I’m inquisitive,” said the cantinière, ceasing to address him in the second person singular, “it’s for your good I ask you these questions. Who are you, now, really?”

Fabrizio did not reply at first. He was considering that never again would he find more devoted friends to ask for advice, and he was in urgent need of advice from someone. “We are coming into a fortified place, the governor will want to know who I am, and ware prison if I let him see by my answers that I know nobody in the 4th Hussar Regiment, whose uniform I am wearing!” In his capacity as an Austrian subject, Fabrizio knew all about the importance to be attached to a passport. Various members of his family, although noble and devout, although supporters of the winning side, had been in trouble a score of times over their passports; he was therefore not in the least put out by the question which the cantinière had addressed to him. But as, before answering, he had to think of the French words which would express his meaning most clearly, the cantinière, pricked by a keen curiosity, added, to induce him to speak: “Corporal Aubry and I are going to give you some good advice.”

“I have no doubt you are,” replied Fabrizio. “My name is Vasi and I come from Genoa; my sister, who is famous for her beauty, is married to a captain. As I am only seventeen, she made me come to her to let me see something of France, and form my character a little; not finding her in Paris, and knowing that she was with this army, I came on here. I’ve searched for her everywhere and haven’t found her. The soldiers, who were puzzled by my accent, had me arrested. I had money then, I gave some to the gendarme, who let me have some marching orders and a uniform, and said to me: ‘Get away with you, and swear you’ll never mention my name.’”

“What was he called?” asked the cantinière.

“I’ve given my word,” said Fabrizio.

“He’s right,” put in the corporal, “the gendarme is a sweep, but our friend ought not to give his name. And what is the other one called, this captain, your sister’s husband? If we knew his name, we could try to find him.”

“Teulier, Captain in the 4th Hussars,” replied our hero.

“And, so,” said the corporal, with a certain subtlety, “from your foreign accent the soldiers took you for a spy?”

“That’s the abominable word!” cried Fabrizio, his eyes blazing. “I who love the Emperor so and the French people! And it was that insult that annoyed me more than anything.”

“There’s no insult about it; that’s where you’re wrong; the soldiers’ mistake was quite natural,” replied Corporal Aubry gravely.

And he went on to explain in the most pedantic manner that in the army one must belong to some corps and wear a uniform, failing which it was quite simple that people should take one for a spy. “The enemy sends us any number of them; everybody’s a traitor in this war.” The scales fell from Fabrizio’s eyes; he realised for the first time that he had been in the wrong in everything that had happened to him during the last two months.

“But make the boy tell us the whole story,” said the cantinière, her curiosity more and more excited. Fabrizio obeyed. When he had finished:

“It comes to this,” said the cantinière, speaking in a serious tone to the corporal, “this child is not a soldier at all; we’re going to have a bloody war now that we’ve been beaten and betrayed. Why should he go and get his bones broken free, gratis and for nothing?”

“Especially,” put in the corporal, “as he doesn’t even know how to load his musket, neither by numbers, nor in his own time. It was I put in the shot that brought down the Prussian.”

“Besides, he lets everyone see the colour of his money,” added the cantinière; “he will be robbed of all he has as soon as he hasn’t got us to

look after him."

"The first cavalry non-com he comes across," said the corporal, "will take it from him to pay for his drink, and perhaps they'll enlist him for the enemy; they're all traitors. The first man he meets will order him to follow, and he'll follow him; he would do better to join our Regiment."

"No, please, if you don't mind, Corporal!" Fabrizio exclaimed with animation; "I am more comfortable on a horse. And, besides, I don't know how to load a musket, and you have seen that I can manage a horse."

Fabrizio was extremely proud of this little speech. We need not report the long discussion that followed between the corporal and the cantinière as to his future destiny. Fabrizio noticed that in discussing him these people repeated three or four times all the circumstances of his story: the soldiers' suspicions, the gendarme selling him marching orders and a uniform, the accident by which, the day before, he had found himself forming part of the Marshal's escort, the glimpse of the Emperor as he galloped past, the horse that had been scoffed from him, and so on indefinitely.

With feminine curiosity the cantinière kept harking back incessantly to the way in which he had been dispossessed of the good horse which she had made him buy.

"You felt yourself seized by the feet, they lifted you gently over your horse's tail, and sat you down on the ground!" "Why repeat so often," Fabrizio said to himself, "what all three of us know perfectly well?" He had not yet discovered that this is how, in France, the lower orders proceed in quest of ideas.

"How much money have you?" the cantinière asked him suddenly. Fabrizio had no hesitation in answering. He was sure of the nobility of the woman's nature; that is the fine side of France.

"Altogether, I may have got left thirty napoleons in gold, and eight or nine five-franc pieces."

"In that case, you have a clear field!" exclaimed the cantinière. "Get right away from this rout of an army; clear out, take the first road with ruts on it

that you come to on the right; keep your horse moving and your back to the army. At the first opportunity, buy some civilian clothes. When you've gone nine or ten leagues and there are no more soldiers in sight, take the mail-coach, and go and rest for a week and eat beefsteaks in some nice town. Never let anyone know that you've been in the army, or the police will take you up as a deserter; and, nice as you are, my boy, you're not quite clever enough yet to stand up to the police. As soon as you've got civilian clothes on your back, tear up your marching orders into a thousand pieces and go back to your real name: say that you're Vasi. And where ought he to say he comes from?" she asked the corporal.

"From Cambrai on the Scheldt: it's a good town and quite small, if you know what I mean. There's a cathedral there, and Fénelon."

"That's right," said the cantinière. "Never let on to anyone that you've been in battle, don't breathe a word about B —— — , or the gendarme who sold you the marching orders. When you're ready to go back to Paris, make first for Versailles, and pass the Paris barrier from that side in a leisurely way, on foot, as if you were taking a stroll. Sew up your napoleons inside your breeches, and remember, when you have to pay for anything, shew only the exact sum that you want to spend. What makes me sad is that they'll take you and rob you and strip you of everything you have. And whatever will you do without money, you that don't know how to look after yourself . . . " and so on.

The good woman went on talking for some time still; the corporal indicated his support by nodding his head, not being able to get a word in himself. Suddenly the crowd that was packing the road first of all doubled its pace, then, in the twinkling of an eye, crossed the little ditch that bounded the road on the left and fled helter-skelter across country. Cries of "The Cossacks! The Cossacks!" rose from every side.

"Take back your horse!" the cantinière shouted.

"God forbid!" said Fabrizio. "Gallop! Away with you! I give him to you. Do you want something to buy another cart with? Half of what I have is yours."

‘Take back your horse, I tell you!” cried the cantinière angrily; and she prepared to dismount. Fabrizio drew his sabre. “Hold on tight!” she shouted to her, and gave two or three strokes with the flat of his sabre to the horse, which broke into a gallop and followed the fugitives.

Our hero stood looking at the road; a moment ago, two or three thousand people had been jostling along it, packed together like peasants at the tail of a procession. After the shout of: “Cossacks!” he saw not a soul on it; the fugitives had cast away shakoes, muskets, sabres, everything. Fabrizio, quite bewildered, climbed up into a field on the right of the road and twenty or thirty feet above it; he scanned the line of the road in both directions, and the plain, but saw no trace of the Cossacks. “Funny people, these French!” he said to himself. “Since I have got to go to the right,” he thought, “I may as well start off at once; it is possible that these people have a reason for running away that I don’t know.” He picked up a musket, saw that it was charged, shook up the powder in the priming, cleaned the flint, then chose a cartridge-pouch that was well filled and looked round him again in all directions; he was absolutely alone in the middle of this plain which just now had been so crowded with people. In the far distance he could see the fugitives, who were beginning to disappear behind the trees, and were still running. “That’s a very odd thing,” he said to himself, and remembering the tactics employed by the corporal the night before, he went and sat down in the middle of a field of corn. He did not go farther because he was anxious to see again his good friends the cantinière and Corporal Aubry.

In this cornfield, he made the discovery that he had no more than eighteen napoleons, instead of thirty as he had supposed; but he still had some small diamonds which he had stowed away in the lining of the hussar’s boots, before dawn, in the gaoler’s wife’s room at B —— . He concealed his napoleons as best he could, pondering deeply the while on the sudden disappearance of the others. “Is that a bad omen for me?” he asked himself. What distressed him most was that he had not asked Corporal Aubry the question: “Have I really taken part in a battle?” It seemed to him that he had, and his happiness would have known no bounds could he have been certain of this.

“But even if I have,” he said to himself, “I took part in it bearing the name of a prisoner, I had a prisoner’s marching orders in my pocket, and, worse still,

his coat on my back! That is the fatal threat to my future: what would the Priore Blanès say to it? And that wretched Boulot died in prison. It is all of the most sinister augury; fate will lead me to prison." Fabrizio would have given anything in the world to know whether Trooper Boulot had really been guilty; when he searched his memory, he seemed to recollect that the gaoler's wife had told him that the hussar had been taken up not only for the theft of silver plate but also for stealing a cow from a peasant and nearly beating the peasant to death: Fabrizio had no doubt that he himself would be sent to prison some day for a crime which would bear some relation to that of Trooper Boulot. He thought of his friend the parroco Blanès: what would he not have given for an opportunity of consulting him! Then he remembered that he had not written to his aunt since leaving Paris. "Poor Gina!" he said to himself. And tears stood in his eyes, when suddenly he heard a slight sound quite close to him: a soldier was feeding three horses on the standing corn; he had taken the bits out of their mouths and they seemed half dead with hunger; he was holding them by the snaffle. Fabrizio got up like a partridge; the soldier seemed frightened. Our hero noticed this, and yielded to the pleasure of playing the hussar for a moment.

"One of those horses belongs to me, f —— you, but I don't mind giving you five francs for the trouble you've taken in bringing it here."

"What are you playing at?" said the soldier. Fabrizio took aim at him from a distance of six paces.

"Let go the horse, or I'll blow your head off."

The soldier had his musket slung on his back; he reached over his shoulder to seize it.

"If you move an inch, you're a dead man!" cried Fabrizio, rushing upon him.

"All right, give me the five francs and take one of the horses," said the embarrassed soldier, after casting a rueful glance at the high road, on which there was absolutely no one to be seen. Fabrizio, keeping his musket raised in his left hand, with the right flung him three five-franc pieces.

“Dismount, or you’re a dead man. Bridle the black, and go farther off with the other two. . . . If you move, I fire.”

The soldier looked savage but obeyed. Fabrizio went up to the horse and passed the rein over his left arm, without losing sight of the soldier, who was moving slowly away; when our hero saw that he had gone fifty paces, he jumped nimbly on to the horse. He had barely mounted and was feeling with his foot for the off stirrup when he heard a bullet whistle past close to his head: it was the soldier who had fired at him. Fabrizio; beside himself with rage, started galloping after the soldier who ran off as fast as his legs could carry him, and presently Fabrizio saw him mount one of his two horses and gallop away. “Good, he’s out of range now,” he said to himself. The horse he had just bought was a magnificent animal, but seemed half starved. Fabrizio returned to the high road, where there was still not a living soul; he crossed it and put his horse into a trot to reach a little fold in the ground on the left, where he hoped to find the cantinière; but when he was at the top of the little rise he could see nothing save, more than a league away, a few scattered troops. “It is written that I shall not see her again,” he said to himself with a sigh, “the good, brave woman!” He came to a farm which he had seen in the distance on the right of the road. Without dismounting, and after paying for it in advance, he made the farmer produce some oats for his poor horse, which was so famished that it began to gnaw the manger. An hour later, Fabrizio was trotting along the high road, still in the hope of meeting the cantinière, or at any rate Corporal Aubry. Moving all the time and keeping a look-out all round him, he came to a marshy river crossed by a fairly narrow wooden bridge. Between him and the bridge, on the right of the road, was a solitary house bearing the sign of the White Horse. “There I shall get some dinner,” thought Fabrizio. A cavalry officer with his arm in a sling was guarding the approach to the bridge; he was on horseback and looked very melancholy; ten paces away from him, three dismounted troopers were filling their pipes.

“There are some people,” Fabrizio said to himself, “who look to me very much as though they would like to buy my horse for even less than he cost me.” The wounded officer and the three men on foot watched him approach and seemed to be waiting for him. “It would be better not to cross by this bridge, but to follow the river bank to the right; that was the way the cantinière advised me to take to get clear of difficulties. . . . Yes,” thought

our hero, “but if I take to my heels now, tomorrow I shall be thoroughly ashamed of myself; besides, my horse has good legs, the officer’s is probably tired; if he tries to make me dismount I shall gallop.” Reasoning thus with himself, Fabrizio pulled up his horse and moved forward at the slowest possible pace.

“Advance, you, hussar!” the officer called to him with an air of authority.

Fabrizio went on a few paces and then halted.

“Do you want to take my horse?” he shouted.

“Not in the least; advance.”

Fabrizio examined the officer; he had a white moustache, and looked the best fellow in the world; the handkerchief that held up his left arm was drenched with blood, and his right hand also was bound up in a piece of bloodstained linen. “It is the men on foot who are going to snatch my bridle,” thought Fabrizio; but, on looking at them from nearer, he saw that they too were wounded.

“On your honour as a soldier,” said the officer, who wore the epaulettes of a colonel, “stay here on picket, and tell all the dragoons, chasseurs and hussars that you see that Colonel Le Baron is in the inn over there, and that I order them to come and report to me.” The old colonel had the air of a man broken by suffering; with his first words he had made a conquest of our hero, who replied with great good sense:

“I am very young, sir, to make them listen to me; I ought to have a written order from you.”

“He is right,” said the colonel, studying him closely; “make out the order, La Rose, you’ve got the use of your right hand.”

Without saying a word, La Rose took from his pocket a little parchment book, wrote a few lines, and, tearing out a leaf, handed it to Fabrizio; the colonel repeated the order to him, adding that after two hours on duty he would be relieved, as was right and proper, by one of the three wounded troopers he had with him. So saying he went into the inn with his men.

Fabrizio watched them go and sat without moving at the end of his wooden bridge, so deeply impressed had he been by the sombre, silent grief of these three persons. “One would think they were under a spell,” he said to himself. At length he unfolded the paper and read the order, which ran as follows:

“Colonel Le Baron, 6th Dragoons, Commanding the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division of the XIV Corps, orders all cavalrymen, dragoons, chasseurs and hussars, on no account to cross the bridge, and to report to him at the White Horse Inn, by the bridge, which is his headquarters.

“Headquarters, by the bridge of La Sainte, June 19, 1815. “For Colonel Le Baron, wounded in the right arm, and by his orders,

“LA ROSE, Serjeant.”

Fabrizio had been on guard at the bridge for barely half an hour when he saw six chasseurs approaching him mounted, and three on foot; he communicated the colonel’s order to them. “We’re coming back,” said four of the mounted men, and crossed the bridge at a fast trot. Fabrizio then spoke to the other two. During the discussion, which grew heated, the three men on foot crossed the bridge. Finally, one of the two mounted troopers who had stayed behind asked to see the order again, and carried it off, with:

“I am taking it to the others, who will come back without fail; wait for them here.” And off he went at a gallop; his companion followed him. All this had happened in the twinkling of an eye.

Fabrizio was furious, and called to one of the wounded soldiers, who appeared at a window of the White Horse.

This soldier, on whose arm Fabrizio saw the stripes of a cavalry serjeant, came down and shouted to him: “Draw your sabre, man, you’re on picket.” Fabrizio obeyed, then said: “They’ve carried off. the order.”

“They’re out of hand after yesterday’s affair,” replied the other in a melancholy tone. “I’ll let you have one of my pistols; if they force past you again, fire it in the air; I shall come, or the colonel himself will appear.”

Fabrizio had not failed to observe the serjeant's start of surprise on hearing of the theft of the order. He realised that it was a personal insult to himself, and promised himself that he would not allow such a trick to be played on him again.

Armed with the sergeant's horse-pistol, Fabrizio had proudly resumed his guard when he saw coming towards him seven hussars, mounted. He had taken up a position that barred the bridge; he read them the colonel's order, which seemed greatly to annoy them; the most venturesome of them tried to pass. Fabrizio, following the wise counsel of his friend the vivandière, who, the morning before, had told him that he must thrust and not slash, lowered the point of his long, straight sabre and made as though to stab with it the man who was trying to pass him.

"Oh, so he wants to kill us, the baby!" cried the hussars, "as if we hadn't been killed quite enough yesterday!" They all drew their sabres at once and fell on Fabrizio: he gave himself up for dead; but he thought of the serjeant's surprise, and was not anxious to earn his contempt again. Drawing back on to his bridge, he tried to reach them with his sabre-point. He looked so absurd when he tried to wield this huge, straight heavy-dragoon sabre, a great deal too heavy for him, that the hussars soon saw with what sort of soldier they had to deal; they then endeavoured not to wound him but to slash his clothing. In this way Fabrizio received three or four slight sabre-cuts on his arms. For his own part, still faithful to the cantinière's precept, he kept thrusting the point of his sabre at them with all his might. As ill luck would have it, one of these thrusts wounded a hussar in the hand: highly indignant at being touched by so raw a recruit, he replied with a downward thrust which caught Fabrizio in the upper part of the thigh. What made this blow effective was that our hero's horse, so far from avoiding the fray, seemed to take pleasure in it and to be flinging himself on the assailants. These, seeing Fabrizio's blood streaming along his right arm, were afraid that they might have carried the game too far, and, pushing him against the left-hand parapet of the bridge, crossed at a gallop. As soon as Fabrizio had a moment to himself he fired his pistol in the air to warn the colonel.

Four mounted hussars and two on foot, of the same regiment as the others, were coming towards the bridge and were still two hundred yards away from it when the pistol went off. They had been paying close attention to what

was happening on the bridge, and, imagining that Fabrizio had fired at their comrades, the four mounted men galloped upon him with raised sabres: it was a regular cavalry charge. Colonel Le Baron, summoned by the pistol-shot, opened the door of the inn and rushed on to the bridge just as the galloping hussars reached it, and himself gave them the order to halt.

'There's no colonel here now!" cried one of them, and pressed on his horse. The colonel in exasperation broke off the reprimand he was giving them, and with his wounded right hand seized the rein of this horse on the off side.

"Halt! You bad soldier," he said to the hussar; "I know you, you're in Captain Henriot's squadron."

"Very well, then! The captain can give me the order himself! Captain Henriot was killed yesterday," he added with a snigger, "and you can go and f —— yourself!"

So saying, he tried to force a passage, and pushed the old colonel, who fell in a sitting position on the roadway of the bridge. Fabrizio, who was a couple of yards farther along upon the bridge, but facing the inn, pressed his horse, and, while the breast-piece of the assailant's harness threw down the old colonel, who never let go the off rein, Fabrizio, indignant, bore down upon the hussar with a driving thrust. Fortunately the hussar's horse, feeling itself pulled towards the ground by the rein which the colonel still held, made a movement sideways, with the result that the long blade of Fabrizio's heavy-cavalry sabre slid along the hussar's jacket, and the whole length of it passed beneath his eyes. Furious, the hussar turned round and, using all his strength, dealt Fabrizio a blow which cut his sleeve and went deep into his arm: our hero fell.

One of the dismounted hussars, seeing the two defenders of the bridge on the ground, seized the opportunity, jumped on to Fabrizio's horse and tried to make off with it by starting at a gallop across the bridge.

The serjeant, as he hurried from the inn, had seen his colonel fall, and supposed him to be seriously wounded. He ran after Fabrizio's horse and plunged the point of his sabre into the thief's entrails; he fell. The hussars,

seeing no one now on the bridge but the serjeant, who was on foot, crossed at a gallop and rapidly disappeared. The one on foot bolted into the fields.

The serjeant came up to the wounded men. Fabrizio was already on his feet; he was not in great pain, but was bleeding profusely. The colonel got up more slowly; he was quite stunned by his fall, but had received no injury. “I feel nothing,” he said to the serjeant, “except the old wound in my hand.”

The hussar whom the serjeant had wounded was dying.

“The devil take him!” exclaimed the colonel. “But,” he said to the serjeant and the two troopers who came running out, “look after this young man whose life I have risked, most improperly. I shall stay on the bridge myself and try to stop these madmen. Take the young man to the inn and tie up his arm. Use one of my shirts.”

CHAPTER FIVE

The whole of this adventure had not lasted a minute. Fabrizio's wounds were nothing; they tied up his arm with bandages torn from the colonel's shirt. They wanted to make up a bed for him upstairs in the inn.

"But while I am tucked up here on the first floor," said Fabrizio to the serjeant, "my horse, who is down in the stable, will get bored with being left alone and will go off with another master."

"Not bad for a conscript!" said the serjeant. And they deposited Fabrizio on a litter of clean straw in the same stall as his horse.

Then, as he was feeling very weak, the serjeant brought him a bowl of mulled wine and talked to him for a little. Several compliments included in this conversation carried our hero to the seventh heaven.

Fabrizio did not wake until dawn on the following day; the horses were neighing continuously and making a frightful din; the stable was filled with smoke. At first Fabrizio could make nothing of all this noise, and did not even know where he was: finally, half stifled by the smoke, it occurred to him that the house was on fire; in the twinkling of an eye he was out of the stable and in the saddle. He raised his head; smoke was belching violently from the two windows over the stable; and the roof was covered by a black smoke which rose curling into the air. A hundred fugitives had arrived during the night at the White Horse; they were all shouting and swearing. The five or six whom Fabrizio could see close at hand seemed to him to be completely drunk; one of them tried to stop him and called out to him: "Where are you taking my horse?"

When Fabrizio had gone a quarter of a league, he turned his head. There was no one following him; the building was in flames. Fabrizio caught sight of the bridge; he remembered his wound, and felt his arm compressed by bandages and very hot. "And the old colonel, what has become of him? He gave his shirt to tie up my arm." Our hero was this morning the coolest man

in the world; the amount of blood he had shed had liberated him from all the romantic element in his character.

“To the right!” he said to himself, “and no time to lose.” He began quietly following the course of the river which, after passing under the bridge, ran to the right of the road. He remembered the good cantinière’s advice. “What friendship!” he said to himself, “what an open nature!”

After riding for an hour he felt very weak. “Oho! Am I going to faint?” he wondered. “If I faint, someone will steal my horse, and my clothes, perhaps, and my money and jewels with them.” He had no longer the strength to hold the reins, and was trying to keep his balance in the saddle when a peasant who was digging in a field by the side of the high road noticed his pallor and came up to offer him a glass of beer and some bread.

“When I saw you look so pale, I thought you must be one of the wounded from the great battle,” the peasant told him. Never did help come more opportunely. As Fabrizio was munching the piece of bread his eyes began to hurt him when he looked straight ahead. When he felt a little better he thanked the man. “And where am I?” he asked. The peasant told him that three quarters of a league farther on he would come to the township of Zonders, where he would be very well looked after. Fabrizio reached the town, not knowing quite what he was doing and thinking only at every step of not falling off his horse. He saw a big door standing open; he entered. It was the Woolcomb Inn. At once there ran out to him the good lady of the house, an enormous woman; she called for help in a voice that throbbed with pity. Two girls came and helped Fabrizio to dismount; no sooner had his feet touched the ground than he fainted completely. A surgeon was fetched, who bled him. For the rest of that day and the days that followed Fabrizio scarcely knew what was being done to him; he slept almost without interruption.

The sabre wound in his thigh threatened to form a serious abscess. When his mind was clear again, he asked them to look after his horse, and kept on repeating that he would pay them well, which shocked the good hostess and her daughters. For a fortnight he was admirably looked after and he was beginning to be himself again when he noticed one evening that his hostesses seemed greatly upset. Presently a German officer came into his

room: in answering his questions they used a language which Fabrizio did not understand, but he could see that they were speaking about him; he pretended to be asleep. A little later, when he thought that the officer must have gone, he called his hostesses.

“That officer came to put my name on a list, and make me a prisoner, didn’t he?” The landlady assented with tears in her eyes.

“Very well, there is money in my dolman!” he cried, sitting up in bed; “buy me some civilian clothes and tonight I shall go away on my horse. You have already saved my life once by taking me in just as I was going to drop down dead in the street; save it again by giving me the means of going back to my mother.”

At this point the landlady’s daughters began to dissolve in tears; they trembled for Fabrizio; and, as they barely understood French, they came to his bedside to question him. They talked with their mother in Flemish; but at every moment pitying eyes were turned on our hero; he thought he could make out that his escape might compromise them seriously, but that they would gladly incur the risk. A Jew in the town supplied a complete outfit, but when he brought it to the inn about ten o’clock that night, the girls saw, on comparing it with Fabrizio’s dolman, that it would require an endless amount of alteration. At once they set to work; there was no time to lose. Fabrizio showed them where several napoleons were hidden in his uniform, and begged his hostesses to stitch them into the new garments. With these had come a fine pair of new boots. Fabrizio had no hesitation in asking these kind girls to slit open the hussar’s boots at the place which he shewed them, and they hid the little diamonds in the lining of the new pair.

One curious result of his loss of blood and the weakness that followed from it was that Fabrizio had almost completely forgotten his French; he used Italian to address his hostesses, who themselves spoke a Flemish dialect, so that their conversation had to be conducted almost entirely in signs. When the girls, who for that matter were entirely disinterested, saw the diamonds, their enthusiasm for Fabrizio knew no bounds; they imagined him to be a prince in disguise. Aniken, the younger and less sophisticated, kissed him without ceremony. Fabrizio, for his part, found them charming, and towards midnight, when the surgeon had allowed him a little wine in view of the

journey he had to take, he felt almost inclined not to go. “Where could I be better off than here?” he asked himself. However, about two o’clock in the morning, he rose and dressed. As he was leaving the room, his good hostess informed him that his horse had been taken by the officer who had come to search the house that afternoon.

“Ah! The swine!” cried Fabrizio with an oath, “robbing a wounded man!” He was not enough of a philosopher, this young Italian, to bear in mind the price at which he himself had acquired the horse.

Aniken told him with tears that they had hired a horse for him. She would have liked him not to go. Their farewells were tender. Two big lads, cousins of the good landlady, helped Fabrizio into the saddle: during the journey they supported him on his horse, while a third, who walked a few hundred yards in advance of the little convoy, searched the roads for any suspicious patrol. After going for a couple of hours, they stopped at the house of a cousin of the landlady of the Woolcomb. In spite of anything that Fabrizio might say, the young men who accompanied him refused absolutely to leave him; they claimed that they knew better than anyone the hidden paths through the woods.

“But tomorrow morning, when my flight becomes known, and they don’t see you anywhere in the town, your absence will make things awkward for you,” said Fabrizio.

They proceeded on their way. Fortunately, when day broke at last, the plain was covered by a thick fog. About eight o’clock in the morning they came in sight of a little town. One of the young men went on ahead to see if the post-horses there had been stolen. The postmaster had had time to make them vanish and to raise a team of wretched screws with which he had filled his stables. Grooms were sent to find a pair of horses in the marshes where they were hidden, and three hours later Fabrizio climbed into a little cabriolet which was quite dilapidated but had harnessed to it a pair of good post-horses. He had regained his strength. The moment of parting with the young men, his hostess’s cousins, was pathetic in the extreme; on no account, whatever friendly pretext Fabrizio might find, would they consent to take any money.

“In your condition, sir, you need it more than we do,” was the invariable reply of these worthy young fellows. Finally they set off with letters in which Fabrizio, somewhat emboldened by the agitation of the journey, had tried to convey to his hostesses all that he felt for them. Fabrizio wrote with tears in his eyes, and there was certainly love in the letter addressed to little Aniken.

In the rest of the journey there was nothing out of the common. He reached Amiens in great pain from the cut he had received in his thigh; it had not occurred to the country doctor to lance the wound, and in spite of the bleedings an abscess had formed. During the fortnight that Fabrizio spent in the inn at Amiens, kept by an obsequious and avaricious family, the Allies were invading France, and Fabrizio became another man, so many and profound were his reflexions on the things that had happened to him. He had remained a child upon one point only: what he had seen, was it a battle; and, if so, was that battle Waterloo? For the first time in his life he found pleasure in reading; he was always hoping to find in the newspapers, or in the published accounts of the battle, some description which would enable him to identify the ground he had covered with Marshal Ney’s escort, and afterwards with the other general. During his stay at Amiens he wrote almost every day to his good friends at the Woolcomb. As soon as his wound was healed, he came to Paris. He found at his former hotel a score of letters from his mother and aunt, who implored him to return home as soon as possible. The last letter from Contessa Pietranera had a certain enigmatic tone which made him extremely uneasy; this letter destroyed all his tender fancies. His was a character to which a single word was enough to make him readily anticipate the greatest misfortunes; his imagination then stepped in and depicted these misfortunes to him with the most horrible details.

“Take care never to sign the letters you write to tell us what you are doing,” the Contessa warned him. “On your return you must on no account come straight to the Lake of Como. Stop at Lugano, on Swiss soil.” He was to arrive in this little town under the name of Cavi; he would find at the principal inn the Contessa’s footman, who would tell him what to do. His aunt ended her letter as follows: “Take every possible precaution to keep your mad escapade secret, and above all do not carry on you any printed or written document; in Switzerland you will be surrounded by the friends of Santa Margherita.† If I have enough money,” the Contessa told him, “I shall

send someone to Geneva, to the Hôtel des Balances, and you shall have particulars which I cannot put in writing but which you ought to know before coming here. But, in heaven's name, not a day longer in Paris; you will be recognised there by our spies." Fabrizio's imagination set to work to construct the wildest hypotheses, and he was incapable of any other pleasure save that of trying to guess what the strange information could be that his aunt had to give him. Twice on his passage through France he was arrested, but managed to get away; he was indebted, for these unpleasantnesses, to his Italian passport and to that strange description of him as a dealer in barometers, which hardly seemed to tally with his youthful face and the arm which he carried in a sling.

[† Silvio Pellico has given this name a European notoriety: it is that of the street in Milan in which the police headquarters and prisons are situated.]

Finally, at Geneva, he found a man in the Contessa's service, who gave him a message from her to the effect that he, Fabrizio, had been reported to the police at Milan as having gone abroad to convey to Napoleon certain proposals drafted by a vast conspiracy organised in the former Kingdom of Italy. If this had not been the object of his journey, the report went on, why should he have gone under an assumed name? His mother was endeavouring to establish the truth, as follows:

1st, that he had never gone beyond Switzerland.

2ndly, that he had left the castle suddenly after a quarrel with his elder brother.

On hearing this story Fabrizio felt a thrill of pride. "I am supposed to have been a sort of ambassador to Napoleon," he said to himself; "I should have had the honour of speaking to that great man: would to God I had!" He recalled that his ancestor seven generations back, a grandson of him who came to Milan in the train of the Sforza, had had the honour of having his head cut off by the Duke's enemies, who surprised him as he was on his way to Switzerland to convey certain proposals to the Free Cantons and to raise troops there. He saw in his mind's eye the print that illustrated this exploit in the genealogy of the family. Fabrizio, questioning the servant, found him shocked by a detail which finally he allowed to escape him, despite the

express order, several times repeated to him by the Contessa, not to reveal it. It was Ascanio, his elder brother, who had reported him to the Milan police. This cruel news almost drove our hero out of his mind. >From Geneva, in order to go to Italy, one must pass through Lausanne; he insisted on setting off at once on foot, and thus covering ten to twelve leagues, although the mail from Geneva to Lausanne was starting in two hours' time. Before leaving Geneva he picked a quarrel in one of the melancholy cafés of the place with a young man who, he said, stared at him in a singular fashion. Which was perfectly true: the young Genevan, phlegmatic, rational and interested only in money, thought him mad; Fabrizio oh coming in had glared furiously in all directions, then had upset the cup of coffee that was brought to him over his breeches. In this quarrel Fabrizio's first movement was quite of the sixteenth century: instead of proposing a duel to the young Genevan, he drew his dagger and rushed upon him to stab him with it. In this moment of passion, Fabrizio forgot everything he had ever learned of the laws of honour and reverted to instinct, or, more properly speaking, to the memories of his earliest childhood.

The confidential agent whom he found at Lugano increased his fury by furnishing him with fresh details. As Fabrizio was beloved at Grianta, no one there had mentioned his name, and, but for his brother's kind intervention, everyone would have pretended to believe that he was at Milan, and the attention of the police in that city would not have been drawn to his absence.

"I expect the doganieri have a description of you," his aunt's envoy hinted, "and if we keep to the main road, when you come to the frontier of the Lombardo–Venetian Kingdom, you will be arrested."

Fabrizio and his party were familiar with every footpath over the mountain that divides Lugano from the Lake of Como; they disguised themselves as hunters, that is to say as poachers, and as they were three in number and had a fairly resolute bearing, the doganieri whom they passed gave them a greeting and nothing more. Fabrizio arranged things so as not to arrive at the castle until nearly midnight; at that hour his father and all the powdered footmen had long been in bed. He climbed down without difficulty into the deep moat and entered the castle by the window of a cellar: it was there that his mother and aunt were waiting for him; presently his sisters came running in. Transports of affection alternated with tears for some time, and they had

scarcely begun to talk reasonably when the first light of dawn came to warn these people who thought themselves so unfortunate that time was flying.

“I hope your brother won’t have any suspicion of your being here,” Signora Pietranera said to him; “I have scarcely spoken to him since that fine escapade of his, and his vanity has done me the honour of taking offence. This evening, at supper, I condescended to say a few words to him; I had to find some excuse to hide my frantic joy, which might have made him suspicious. Then, when I noticed that he was quite proud of this sham reconciliation, I took advantage of his happiness to make him drink a great deal too much, and I am certain he will never have thought of taking any steps to carry on his profession of spying.”

“We shall have to hide our hussar in your room,” said the Marchesa; “he can’t leave at once; we haven’t sufficient command of ourselves at present to make plans, and we shall have to think out the best way of putting those terrible Milan police off the track.”

This plan was adopted; but the Marchese and his elder son noticed, next day, that the Marchesa was constantly in her sister-in-law’s room. We shall not stop to depict the transports of affection and joy which continued, all that day, to convulse these happy creatures. Italian hearts are, far more than ours in France, tormented by the suspicions and wild ideas which a burning imagination presents to them, but on the other hand their joys are far more intense and more lasting. On the day in question the Contessa and Marchesa were literally out of their minds; Fabrizio was obliged to begin all his stories over again; finally they decided to go away and conceal their general joy at Milan, so difficult did it appear to be to keep it hidden any longer from the scrutiny of the Marchese and his son Ascanio.

They took the ordinary boat of the household to go to Como; to have acted otherwise would have aroused endless suspicions. But on arriving at the harbour of Como the Marchesa remembered that she had left behind at Grianta papers of the greatest importance: she hastened to send the boatmen back for them, and so these men could give no account of how the two ladies were spending their time at Como. No sooner had they arrived in the town than they selected haphazard one of the carriages that ply for hire near that tall mediaeval tower which rises above the Milan gate. They started off at

once, without giving the coachman time to speak to anyone. A quarter of a league from the town they found a young sportsman of their acquaintance who, out of courtesy to them as they had no man with them, kindly consented to act as their escort as far as the gates of Milan, whither he was bound for the shooting. All went well, and the ladies were conversing in the most joyous way with the young traveller when, at a bend which the road makes to pass the charming hill and wood of San Giovanni, three constables in plain clothes sprang at the horses' heads. "Ah! My husband has betrayed us," cried the Marchesa, and fainted away. A serjeant who had remained a little way behind came staggering up to the carriage and said, in a voice that reeked of the trattoria:

"I am sorry, sir, but I must do my duty and arrest you, General Fabio Conti."

Fabrizio thought that the serjeant was making a joke at his expense when he addressed him as "General." "You shall pay for this!" he said to himself. He examined the men in plain clothes and watched for a favourable moment to jump down from the carriage and dash across the fields.

The Contessa smiled — a smile of despair, I fancy — then said to the serjeant:

"But, my dear serjeant, is it this boy of sixteen that you take for General Conti?"

"Aren't you the General's daughter?" asked the serjeant.

"Look at my father," said the Contessa, pointing to Fabrizio. The constables went into fits of laughter.

"Show me your passports and don't argue the point," said the serjeant, stung by the general mirth.

"These ladies never take passports to go to Milan," said the coachman with a calm and philosophical air: "they are coming from their castle of Grianta. This lady is the Signora Contessa Pietranera; the other is the Signora Marchesa del Dongo."

The serjeant, completely disconcerted, went forward to the horses' heads and there took counsel with his men. The conference had lasted for fully five minutes when the Contessa asked if the gentlemen would kindly allow the carriage to be moved forward a few yards and stopped in the shade; the heat was overpowering, though it was only eleven o'clock in the morning. Fabrizio, who was looking out most attentively in all directions, seeking a way of escape, saw coming out of a little path through the fields and on to the high road a girl of fourteen or fifteen, who was crying timidly into her handkerchief. She came forward walking between two constables in uniform, and, three paces behind her, also between constables, stalked a tall, lean man who assumed an air of dignity, like a Prefect following a procession.

"Where did you find them?" asked the serjeant, for the moment completely drunk.

"Running away across the fields, with not a sign of a passport about them."

The serjeant appeared to lose his head altogether; he had before him five prisoners, instead of the two that he was expected to have. He went a little way off, leaving only one man to guard the male prisoner who put on the air of majesty, and another to keep the horses from moving.

"Wait," said the Contessa to Fabrizio, who had already jumped out of the carriage. "Everything will be settled in a minute."

They heard a constable exclaim: "What does it matter! If they have no passports, they're fair game whoever they are." The serjeant seemed not quite so certain; the name of Contessa Pietranera made him a little uneasy: he had known the General, and had not heard of his death. "The General is not the man to let it pass, if I arrest his wife without good reason," he said to himself.

During this deliberation, which was prolonged, the Contessa had entered into conversation with the girl, who was standing on the road, and in the dust by the side of the carriage; she had been struck by her beauty.

“The sun will be bad for you, Signorina. This gallant soldier,” she went on, addressing the constable who was posted at the horses’ heads, “will surely allow you to get into the carriage.”

Fabrizio, who was wandering round the vehicle, came up to help the girl to get in. Her foot was already on the step, her arm supported by Fabrizio, when the imposing man, who was six yards behind the carriage, called out in a voice magnified by the desire to preserve his dignity:

“Stay in the road; don’t get into a carriage that does not belong to you!”

Fabrizio had not heard this order; the girl, instead of climbing into the carriage, tried to get down again, and, as Fabrizio continued to hold her up, fell into his arms. He smiled; she blushed a deep crimson; they stood for a moment looking at one another after the girl had disengaged herself from his arms.

“She would be a charming prison companion,” Fabrizio said to himself. “What profound thought lies behind that brow! She would know how to love.”

The serjeant came up to them with an air of authority: “Which of these ladies is named Clelia Conti?”

“I am,” said the girl.

“And I,” cried the elderly man, “am General Fabio Conti, Chamberlain to H.S.H. the Prince of Parma; I consider it most irregular that a man in my position should be hunted down like a thief.”

“The day before yesterday, when you embarked at the harbour of Como, did you not tell the police inspector who asked for your passport to go away? Very well, his orders today are that you are not to go away.”

“I had already pushed off my boat, I was in a hurry, there was a storm threatening, a man not in uniform shouted to me from the quay to put back into harbour, I told him my name and went on.”

“And this morning you escaped from Como.”

“A man like myself does not take a passport when he goes from Milan to visit the lake. This morning, at Como, I was told that I should be arrested at the gate. I left the town on foot with my daughter; I hoped to find on the road some carriage that would take me to Milan, where the first thing I shall do will certainly be to call on the General commanding the Province and lodge a complaint.”

A heavy weight seemed to have been lifted from the serjeant’s mind.

“Very well, General, you are under arrest and I shall take you to Milan. And you, who are you?” he said to Fabrizio.

“My son,” replied the Contessa; “Ascanio, son of the Divisional General Pietranera.”

“Without a passport, Signora Contessa?” said the serjeant, in a much gentler tone.

“At his age, he has never had one; he never travels alone, he is always with me.”

During this colloquy General Conti was standing more and more on his dignity with the constables.

“Not so much talk,” said one of them; “you are under arrest, that’s enough!”

“You will be glad to hear,” said the serjeant, “that we allow you to hire a horse from some contadino; otherwise, never mind all the dust and the heat and the Chamberlain of Parma, you would have to put your best foot foremost to keep pace with our horses.”

The General began to swear.

“Will you kindly be quiet!” the constable repeated. “Where is your general’s uniform? Anybody can come along and say he’s a general.”

The General grew more and more angry. Meanwhile things were looking much brighter in the carriage.

The Contessa kept the constables running about as if they had been her servants. She had given a scudo to one of them to go and fetch wine, and, what was better still, cold water from a cottage that was visible two hundred yards away. She had found time to calm Fabrizio, who was determined, at all costs, to make a dash for the wood that covered the hill. “I have a good brace of pistols,” he said. She obtained the infuriated General’s permission for his daughter to get into the carriage. On this occasion the General, who loved to talk about himself and his family, told the ladies that his daughter was only twelve years old, having been born in 1803, on the 27th of October, but that, such was her intelligence, everyone took her to be fourteen or fifteen.

“A thoroughly common man,” the Contessa’s eyes signalled to the Marchesa. Thanks to the Contessa, everything was settled, after a colloquy that lasted an hour. A constable, who discovered that he had some business to do in the neighbouring village, lent his horse to General Conti, after the Contessa had said to him: “You shall have ten francs.” The serjeant went off by himself with the General; the other constables stayed behind under a tree, accompanied by four huge bottles of wine, almost small demi-johns, which the one who had been sent to the cottage had brought back, with the help of a contadino, Clelia Conti was authorised by the proud Chamberlain to accept, for the return journey to Milan, a seat in the ladies’ carriage, and no one dreamed of arresting the son of the gallant General Pietranera. After the first few minutes had been devoted to an exchange of courtesies and to remarks on the little incident that had just occurred, Clelia Conti observed the note of enthusiasm with which so beautiful a lady as the Contessa spoke to Fabrizio; certainly, she was not his mother. The girl’s attention was caught most of all by repeated allusions to something heroic, bold, dangerous to the last degree, which he had recently done; but for all her cleverness little Clelia could not discover what this was. She gazed with astonishment at this young hero, whose eyes seemed to be blazing still with all the fire of action. For his part, he was somewhat embarrassed by the remarkable beauty of this girl of twelve, and her steady gaze made him blush.

A league outside Milan Fabrizio announced that he was going to see his uncle, and took leave of the ladies.

“If I ever get out of my difficulties,” he said to Clelia, “I shall pay a visit to the beautiful pictures at Parma, and then will you deign to remember the

name: Fabrizio del Dongo?"

"Good!" said the Contessa, "that is how you keep your identity secret. Signorina, deign to remember that this scape-grace is my son, and is called Pietranera, and not del Dongo."

That evening, at a late hour, Fabrizio entered Milan by the Porta Renza, which leads to a fashionable gathering-place. The despatch of their two servants to Switzerland had exhausted the very modest savings of the Marchesa and her sister-in-law; fortunately, Fabrizio had still some napoleons left, and one of the diamonds, which they decided to sell.

The ladies were highly popular, and knew everyone in the town. The most important personages in the Austrian and religious party went to speak on behalf of Fabrizio to Barone Binder, the Chief of Police. These gentlemen could not conceive, they said, how anyone could take seriously the escapade of a boy of sixteen who left the paternal roof after a dispute with an elder brother.

"My business is to take everything seriously," replied Barone Binder gently; a wise and solemn man, he was then engaged in forming the Milan police, and had undertaken to prevent a revolution like that of 1746, which drove the Austrians from Genoa. This Milan police, since rendered so famous by the adventures of Silvio Pellico and M. Andryane, was not exactly cruel; it carried out, reasonably and without pity, harsh laws. The Emperor Francis II wished these over-bold Italian imaginations to be struck by terror.

"Give me, day by day," repeated Barone Binder to Fabrizio's protectors, "a certified account of what the young Marchesino del Dongo has been doing; let us follow him from the moment of his departure on the 8th of March to his arrival last night in this city, where he is hidden in one of the rooms of his mother's apartment, and I am prepared to treat him as the most well-disposed and most frolicsome young man in town. If you cannot furnish me with the young man's itinerary during all the days following his departure from Grianta, however exalted his birth may be, however great the respect I owe to the friends of his family, obviously it is my duty to order his arrest. Am I not bound to keep him in prison until he-has furnished me with proofs that he did not go to convey a message to Napoleon from such disaffected

persons as may exist in Lombardy among the subjects of His Imperial and Royal Majesty? Note farther, gentlemen, that if young del Dongo succeeds in justifying himself on this point, he will still be liable to be charged with having gone abroad without a passport properly issued to himself, and also with assuming a false name and deliberately making use of a passport issued to a common workman, that is to say to a person of a class greatly inferior to that to which he himself belongs."

This declaration, cruelly reasonable, was accompanied by all the marks of deference and respect which the Chief of Police owed to the high position of the Marchesa del Dongo and of the important personages who were intervening on her behalf.

The Marchesa was in despair when Barone Binder's reply was communicated to her.

"Fabrizio will be arrested," she sobbed, "and once he is in prison, God knows when he will get out! His father will disown him!"

Signora Pietranera and her sister-in-law took counsel with two or three ultimate friends, and, in spite of anything these might say, the Marchesa was absolutely determined to send her son away that very night.

"But you can see quite well," the Contessa pointed out to her, "that Barone Binder knows that your son is here; he is not a bad man."

"No; but he is anxious to please the Emperor Francis."

"But, if he thought it would lead to his promotion to put Fabrizio in prison, the boy would be there now; it is showing an insulting defiance of the Barone to send him away."

"But his admission to us that he knows where Fabrizio is, is as much as to say: 'Send him away!' No, I shan't feel alive until I can no longer say to myself: 'In a quarter of an hour my son may be within. prison walls.' Whatever Barone Binder's ambition may be," the Marchesa went on, "he thinks it useful to his personal standing in this country to make certain concessions to oblige a man of my husband's rank, and I see a proof of this in the singular frankness with which he admits that he knows where to lay

hands on my son. Besides, the Barone has been so kind as to let us know the two offences with which Fabrizio is charged, at the instigation of his unworthy brother; he explains that each of these offences means prison: is not that as much as to say that if we prefer exile it is for us to choose?"

"If you choose exile," the Contessa kept on repeating, "we shall never set eyes on him again as long as we live." Fabrizio, who was present at the whole conversation, with an old friend of the Marchesa, now a counsellor on the tribunal set up by Austria, was strongly inclined to take the key of the street and go; and, as a matter of fact, that same evening he left the palazzo, hidden in the carriage that was taking his mother and aunt to the Scala theatre. The coachman, whom they, distrusted, went as usual to wait in an osteria, and while the footmen, on whom they could rely, were looking after the horses, Fabrizio, disguised as a contadino, slipped out of the carriage and escaped from the town. Next morning he crossed the frontier with equal ease, and a few hours later had established himself on a property which his mother owned in Piedmont, near Novara, to be precise, at Romagnano, where Bayard was killed.

It may be imagined how much attention the ladies, on reaching their box in the Scala, paid to the performance. They had gone there solely to be able to consult certain of their friends who belonged to the Liberal party and whose appearance at the palazzo del Dongo might have been misconstrued by the police. In the box it was decided to make a fresh appeal to Barone Binder. There was no question of offering a sum of money to this magistrate who was a perfectly honest man; moreover, the ladies were extremely poor; they had forced Fabrizio to take with him all the money that remained from the sale of the diamond.

It was of the utmost importance that they should be kept constantly informed of the Barone's latest decisions. The Contessa's friends reminded her of a certain Canon Borda, a most charming young man who at one time had tried to make advances to her, in a somewhat violent manner; finding himself unsuccessful he had reported her friendship for Limercati to General Pietranera, whereupon he had been dismissed from the house as a rascal. Now, at present this Canon was in the habit of going every evening to play tarocchi with Baronessa Binder, and was naturally the intimate friend of her husband. The Contessa made up her mind to take the horribly unpleasant

step of going to see this Canon; and the following morning, at an early hour, before he had left the house, she sent in her name.

When the Canon's one and only servant announced: "Contessa Pietranera," his master was so overcome as to be incapable of speech; he made no attempt to repair the disorder of a very scanty attire.

"Shew her in, and leave us," he said in faint accents. The Contessa entered the room; Borda fell on his knees.

"It is in this position that an unhappy madman ought to receive your orders," he said to the Contessa, who, that morning, in a plain costume that was almost a disguise, was irresistibly attractive. Her intense grief at Fabrizio's exile, the violence that she was doing to her own feelings in coming to the house of a man who had behaved treacherously towards her, all combined to give an incredible brilliance to her eyes. "It is in this position that I wish to receive your orders," cried the Canon, "for it is obvious that you have some service to ask of me, otherwise you would not have honoured with your presence the poor dwelling of an unhappy madman; once before, carried away by love and jealousy, he behaved towards you like a scoundrel, as soon as he saw that he could not win your favour."

The words were sincere, and all the more handsome in that the Canon now enjoyed a position of great power; the Contessa was moved to tears by them; humiliation and fear had frozen her spirit; now in a moment affection and a gleam of hope took their place. From a most unhappy state she passed in a flash almost to happiness.

"Kiss my hand," she said, as she held it out to the Canon, "and rise." (She used the second person singular, which in Italy, it must be remembered, indicates a sincere and open friendship just as much as a more tender sentiment.) "I have come to ask your favour for my nephew Fabrizio. This is the whole truth of the story without the slightest concealment, as one tells it to an old friend. At the age of sixteen and a half he has done an intensely stupid thing. We were at the castle of Grianta on the Lake of Como. One evening at seven o'clock we learned by a boat from Como of the Emperor's landing on the shore of the Gulf of Juan. Next morning Fabrizio went off to France, after borrowing the passport of one of his plebeian friends, a dealer

in barometers, named Vasi. As he does not exactly resemble a dealer in barometers, he had hardly gone ten leagues into France when he was arrested on sight; his outbursts of enthusiasm in bad French seemed suspicious. After a time he escaped and managed to reach Geneva; we sent to meet him at Lugano. . . .”

“That is to say, Geneva,” put in the Canon with a smile.

The Contessa finished her story.

“I will do everything for you that is humanly possible,” replied the Canon effusively; “I place myself entirely at your disposal. I will even do imprudent things,” he added. “Tell me, what am I to do as soon as this poor parlour is deprived of this heavenly apparition which marks an epoch in the history of my life?”

“You must go to Barone Binder and tell him that you have loved Fabrizio ever since he was born, that you saw him in his cradle when you used to come to our house, and that accordingly, in the name of the friendship he has shown for you, you beg him to employ all his spies to discover whether, before his departure for Switzerland, Fabrizio was in any sort of communication whatsoever with any of the Liberals whom he has under supervision. If the Barone’s information is of any value, he is bound to see that there is nothing more in this than a piece of boyish folly. You know that I used to have, in my beautiful apartment in the palazzo Dugnani, prints of the battles won by Napoleon: it was by spelling out the legends engraved beneath them that my nephew learned to read. When he was five years old, my poor husband used to explain these battles to him; we put my husband’s helmet on his head, the boy strutted about trailing his big sabre. Very well, one fine day he learns that my husband’s god, the Emperor, has returned to France, he starts out to join him, like a fool, but does not succeed in reaching him. Ask your Barone with what penalty he proposes to punish this moment of folly?”

“I was forgetting one thing,” said the Canon, “you shall see that I am not altogether unworthy of the pardon that you grant me. Here,” he said, looking on the table among his papers, “here is the accusation by that infamous collo-torto” (that is, hypocrite), “see, signed Ascanio Vdiserra del DONGO,

which gave rise to the whole trouble; I found it yesterday at the police headquarters, and went to the Scala in the hope of finding someone who was in the habit of going to your box, through whom I might be able to communicate it to you. A copy of this document reached Vienna long ago. There is the enemy that we have to fight." The Canon read the accusation through with the Contessa, and it was agreed that in the course of the day he would let her have a copy by the hand of some trustworthy person. It was with joy in her heart that the Contessa returned to the palazzo del Dongo.

"No one could possibly be more of a gentleman than that reformed rake," she told the Marchesa. "This evening at the Scala, at a quarter to eleven by the theatre clock, we are to send everyone away from our box, put out the candles, and shut our door, and at eleven the Canon himself will come and tell us what he has managed to do. We decided that this would be the least compromising course for him."

This Canon was a man of spirit; he was careful to keep the appointment; he shewed when he came a complete good nature and an unreserved openness of heart such as are scarcely to be found except in countries where vanity does not predominate over every other sentiment. His denunciation of the Contessa to her husband, General Pietranera, was one of the great sorrows of his life, and he had now found a means of getting rid of that remorse.

That morning, when the Contessa had left his room, "So she's in love with her nephew, is she," he had said to himself bitterly, for he was by no means cured. "With her pride, to have come to me! . . . After that poor Pietranera died, she repulsed with horror my offers of service, though they were most polite and admirably presented by Colonel Scotti, her old lover. The beautiful Pietranera reduced to living on fifteen hundred francs!" the Canon went on, striding vigorously up and down the room. "And then to go and live in the castle of Grianta, with an abominable seccatore like that Marchese del Dongo! . . . I can see it all now! After all, that young Fabrizio is full of charm, tall, well built, always with a smile on his face . . . and, better still, a deliciously voluptuous expression in his eye . . . a Correggio face," the Canon added bitterly.

"The difference in age . . . not too great . . . Fabrizio born after the French came, about '98, I fancy; the Contessa might be twenty-seven or twenty-

eight: no one could be better looking, more adorable. In this country rich in beauties, she defeats them all, the Marini, the Gherardi, the Ruga, the Aresi, the Pietragrua, she is far and away above any of them. They were living happily together, hidden away by that beautiful Lake of Como, when the young man took it into his head to join Napoleon. . . . There are still souls in Italy! In spite of everything! Dear country! No," went on this heart inflamed by jealousy, "impossible to explain in any other way her resigning herself to vegetating in the country, with the disgusting spectacle, day after day, at every meal, of that horrible face of the Marchese del Dongo, as well as that unspeakable pasty physiognomy of the Marchesino Ascanio, who is going to be worse than his father! Well, I shall serve her faithfully. At least I shall have the pleasure of seeing her otherwise than through an opera-glass."

Canon Borda explained the whole case very clearly to the ladies. At heart, Binder was as well disposed as they could wish; he was delighted that Fabrizio should have taken the key of the street before any orders could arrive from Vienna; for Barone Binder had no power to make any decision, he awaited orders in this case as in every other. He sent every day to Vienna an exact copy of all the information that reached him; then he waited.

It was necessary that, in his exile at Romagnano, Fabrizio

(1) Should hear mass daily without fail, take as his confessor a man of spirit, devoted to the cause of the Monarchy, and should confess to him, at the tribunal of penitence, only the most irreproachable sentiments.

(2) Should consort with no one who bore any reputation for intelligence, and, were the need to arise, must speak of rebellion with horror as a thing that no circumstances could justify.

(3) Must never let himself be seen in the caffè, must never read any newspaper other than the official Gazette of Turin and Milan; in general he should shew a distaste for reading, and never open any book printed later than 1720, with the possible exception of the novels of Walter Scott.

(4) "Finally" (the Canon added with a touch of malice), "it is most important that he should pay court openly to one of the pretty women of the district, of

the noble class, of course; this will shew that he has not the dark and dissatisfied mind of an embryo conspirator."

Before going to bed, the Contessa and the Marchesa each wrote Fabrizio an endless letter, in which they explained to him with a charming anxiety all the advice that had been given them by Borda.

‘ Fabrizio had no wish to be a conspirator: he loved Napoleon, and, in his capacity as a young noble, believed that he had been created to be happier than his neighbour, and thought the middle classes absurd. Never had he opened a book since leaving school, where he had read only texts arranged by the Jesuits. He established himself at some distance from Romagnano, in a magnificent palazzo, one of the masterpieces of the famous architect Sanmicheli; but for thirty years it had been uninhabited, so that the rain came into every room and not one of the windows would shut. He took possession of the agent's horses, which he rode without ceremony at all hours of the day; he never spoke, and he thought about things. The recommendation to take a mistress from an ultra family appealed to him, and he obeyed it to the letter. He chose as his confessor a young priest given to intrigue who wished to become a bishop (like the confessor of the Spielberg† but he went three leagues on foot and wrapped himself in a mystery which he imagined to be impenetrable, in order to read the Constitutionnel, which he thought sublime. "It is as fine as Alfieri and Dante!" he used often to exclaim. Fabrizio had this in common with the young men of France, that he was far more seriously taken up with his horse and his newspaper than with his politically sound mistress. But there was no room as yet for imitation of others in this simple and sturdy nature, and he made no friends in the society of the large country town of Romagnano; his simplicity passed as arrogance: no one knew what to make of his character. "He is a younger son who feels himself wronged because he is not the eldest," was the parroco's comment.

[† See the curious Memoirs of M. Andryane, as entertaining as a novel, and as lasting as Tacitus.]

CHAPTER SIX

Let us admit frankly that Canon Borda's jealousy was not altogether unfounded: on his return from France, Fabrizio appeared to the eyes of Contessa Pietranera like a handsome stranger whom she had known well in days gone by. If he had spoken to her of love she would have loved him; had she not already conceived, for his conduct and his person, a passionate and, one might say, unbounded admiration? But Fabrizio embraced her with such an effusion of innocent gratitude and good-fellowship that she would have been horrified with herself had she sought for any other sentiment in this almost filial friendship. "After all," she said to herself, "some of my friends who knew me six years ago, at Prince Eugene's court, may still find me good-looking and even young, but for him I am a respectable woman — and, if the truth must be told without any regard for my vanity, a woman of a certain age." The Contessa was under an illusion as to the period of life at which she had arrived, but it was not the illusion of common women. "Besides, at his age," she went on, "boys are apt to exaggerate the ravages of time. A man with more experience of life . .."

The Contessa, who was pacing the floor of her drawing-room, stopped before a mirror, then smiled. It must be explained that, some months since, the heart of Signora Pietranera had been attacked in a serious fashion, and by a singular personage. Shortly after Fabrizio's departure for France, the Contessa who, without altogether admitting it to herself, was already beginning to take a great interest in him, had fallen into a profound melancholy. All her occupations seemed to her to lack pleasure, and, if one may use the word, savour; she told herself that Napoleon, wishing to secure the attachment of his Italian peoples, would take Fabrizio as his aide-decamp. "He is lost to me!" she exclaimed, weeping, "I shall never see him again; he will write to me, but what shall I be to him in ten years' time?"

It was in this frame of mind that she made an expedition to Milan; she hoped to find there some more immediate news of Napoleon, and, for all she knew, incidentally news of Fabrizio. Without admitting it to herself, this active soul was beginning to be very weary of the monotonous life she was leading in

the country. “It is a postponement of death,” she said to herself, “it is not life.” Every day to see those powdered heads, her brother, her nephew Ascanio, their footmen! What would her excursions on the lake be without Fabrizio? Her sole consolation was based on the ties of friendship that bound her to the Marchesa. But for some time now this intimacy with Fabrizio’s mother, a woman older than herself and with no hope left in life, had begun to be less attractive to her.

Such was the singular position in which Signora Pietranera was placed: with Fabrizio away, she had little hope for the future. Her heart was in need of consolation and novelty. On arriving in Milan she conceived a passion for the fashionable opera; she would go and shut herself up alone for hours on end, at the Scala, in the box of her old friend General Scotti. The men whom she tried to meet in order to obtain news of Napoleon and his army seemed to her vulgar and coarse. Going home, she would improvise on her piano until three o’clock in the morning. One evening, at the Scala, in the box of one of her friends to which she had gone in search of news from France, she made the acquaintance of Conte Mosca, a Minister from Parma; he was an agreeable man who spoke of France and Napoleon in a way that gave her fresh reasons for hope or fear. She returned to the same box the following evening; this intelligent man. reappeared and throughout the whole performance she talked to him with enjoyment. Since Fabrizio’s departure she had not found any evening so lively. This man who amused her, Conte Mosca della Rovere Sorezana, was at that time Minister of Police and Finance to that famous Prince of Parma, Ernesto IV, so notorious for his severities, which the Liberals of Milan called cruelties. Mosca might have been forty or forty-five; he had strongly marked features, with no trace of self-importance, and a simple and light-hearted manner which was greatly in his favour; he would have looked very well indeed, if a whim on the part of his Prince had not obliged him to wear powder on his hair as a proof of his soundness in politics. As people have little fear of wounding one another’s vanity, they quickly arrive in Italy at a tone of intimacy, and make personal observations. The antidote to this practice is not to see the other person again if one’s feelings have been hurt.

“Tell me, Conte, why do you powder your hair?” Signora Pietranera asked him at their third meeting. “Powder! A man like you, attractive, still young, who fought on our side in Spain!”

“Because, in the said Spain, I stole nothing, and one must live. I was athirst for glory; a flattering word from the French General, Gouvion Saint–Cyr, who commanded us, was everything to me then. When Napoleon fell, it so happened that while I was eating up my patrimony in his service, my father, a man of imagination, who pictured me as a general already, had been building me a palazzo at Parma. In 1813 I found that my whole worldly wealth consisted of a huge palazzo, half finished, and a pension.”

“A pension: 3,500 francs, like my husband’s?”

“Conte Pietranera commanded a Division. My pension, as a humble squadron commander, has never been more than 800 francs, and even that has been paid to me only since I became Minister of Finance.”

As there was nobody else in the box but the lady of extremely liberal views to whom it belonged, the conversation continued with the same frankness. Conte Mosca, when questioned, spoke of his life at Parma. “In Spain, under General Saint–Cyr, I faced the enemy’s fire to win a cross and a little glory besides, now I dress myself up like an actor in a farce to win a great social position and a few thousand francs a year. Once I had started on this sort of political chessboard, stung by the insolence of my superiors, I determined to occupy one of the foremost posts; I have reached it. But the happiest days of my life will always be those which, now and again, I manage to spend at Milan; here, it seems to me, there still survives the spirit of your Army of Italy.”

The frankness, the disinvoltura with which this Minister of so dreaded a Prince spoke pricked the Contessa’s curiosity; from his title she had expected to find a pedant filled with self-importance; what she saw was a man who was ashamed of the gravity of his position. Mosca had promised to let her have all the news from France that he could collect; this was a grave indiscretion at Milan, during the month that preceded Waterloo; the question for Italy at that time was to be or not to be; everyone at Milan was in a fever, a fever of hope or fear. Amid this universal disturbance, the Contessa started to make inquiries about a man who spoke thus lightly of so coveted a position, and one which, moreover, was his sole means of livelihood.

Certain curious information of an interesting oddity was reported to Signora Pietranera. “Conte Mosca della Rovere Sorezana,” she was told, “is on the point of becoming Prime Minister and declared favourite of Ranuccio–Ernesto IV, the absolute sovereign of Parma and one of the wealthiest Princes in Europe to boot. The Conte would already have attained to this exalted position if he had cared to shew a more solemn face: they say that the Prince often lectures him on this failing.

“‘What do my manners matter to Your Highness,’ he answers boldly, ‘so long as I conduct his affairs?’

“This favourite’s bed of roses,” her informant went on, “is not without its thorns. He has to please a Sovereign, a man of sense and intelligence, no doubt, but a man who, since his accession to an absolute throne, seems to have lost his head altogether and shews, for instance, suspicions worthy of an old woman.

“Ernesto IV is courageous only in war. On the field of battle he has been seen a score of times leading a column to the attack like a gallant general; but after the death of his father, Ernesto III, on his return to his States, where, unfortunately for him, he possesses unlimited power, he set to work to inveigh in the most senseless fashion against Liberals and liberty. Presently he began to imagine that he was hated; finally, in a moment of ill temper, he had two Liberals hanged, who may or may not have been guilty, acting on the advice of a wretch called Rassi, a sort of Minister of Justice.

“From that fatal moment the Prince’s life changed; we find him tormented by the strangest suspicions. He is not fifty, and fear has so reduced him, if one may use the expression, that whenever he speaks of Jacobins, and the plans of the Central Committee in Paris, his face becomes like that of an old man of eighty; he relapses into the fantastic fears of childhood. His favourite, Rassi, the Fiscal General (or Chief Justice), has no influence except through his master’s fear; and whenever he is alarmed for his own position, he makes haste to discover some fresh conspiracy of the blackest and most fantastic order. Thirty rash fellows have banded themselves together to read a number of the Constitutionnel, Rassi declares them to be conspirators, and sends them off to prison in that famous citadel of Parma, the terror of the whole of Lombardy. As it rises to a great height, a hundred

and eighty feet, people say, it is visible from a long way off in the middle of that immense plain; and the physical outlines of the prison, of which horrible things are reported, makes it the queen, governing by fear, of the whole of that plain, which extends from Milan to Bologna."

"Would you believe," said another traveller to the Contessa, "that at night, on the third floor of his palace, guarded by eighty sentinels who every quarter of an hour cry aloud a whole sentence, Ernesto IV trembles in his room. All the doors fastened with ten bolts, and the adjoining rooms, above as well as below him, packed with soldiers, he is afraid of the Jacobins. If a plank creaks in the floor, he snatches up his pistols and imagines there is a Liberal hiding under his bed. At once all the bells in the castle are set ringing, and an aide-decamp goes to awaken Conte Mosca. On reaching the castle, the Minister of Police takes good care not to deny the existence of any conspiracy; on the contrary, alone with the Prince, and armed to the teeth, he inspects every corner of the rooms, looks under the beds, and, in a word, gives himself up to a whole heap of ridiculous actions worthy of an old woman. All these precautions would have seemed highly degrading to the Prince himself in the happy days when he used to go to war and had never killed anyone except in open combat. As he is a man of infinite spirit, he is ashamed of these precautions; they seem to him ridiculous, even at the moment when he is giving way to them, and the source of Conte Mosca's enormous reputation is that he devotes all his skill to arranging that the Prince shall never have occasion to blush in his presence. It is he, Mosca, who, in his capacity as Minister of Police, insists upon looking under the furniture, and, so people say in Parma, even in the cases in which the musicians keep their double-basses. It is the Prince who objects to this and teases his Minister over his excessive punctiliousness. 'It is a challenge,' Conte Mosca replies; 'think of the satirical sonnets the Jacobins would shower on us if we allowed you to 'be killed. It is not only your life that we are defending, it is our honour.'

But it appears that the Prince is only half taken in by this, for if anyone in the town should take it into his head to remark that they have passed a sleepless night at the castle, the Grand Fiscal Rassi sends the impertinent fellow to the citadel, and once in that lofty abode, and in the fresh air, as they say at Parma, it is a miracle if anyone remembers the prisoner's existence. It is because he is a soldier, and in Spain got away a score of times, pistol in

hand, from a tight corner, that the Prince prefers Conte Mosca to Rassi, who is a great deal more flexible and baser. Those unfortunate prisoners in the citadel are kept in the most rigorously secret confinement, and all sort of stories are told about them. The Liberals assert that (and this, they say, is one of Rassi's ideas) the gaolers and confessors are under orders to assure them, about once a month, that one of them is being led out to die. That day the prisoners have permission to climb to the platform of the huge tower, one hundred and eighty feet high, and from there they see a procession file along the plain with some spy who plays the part of a poor devil going to his death."

These stories and a score of others of the same nature and of no less authenticity keenly interested Signora Pietranera: on the following day she asked Conte Mosca, whom she rallied briskly, for details. She found him amusing, and maintained to him that at heart he was a monster without knowing it. One day as he went back to his inn the Conte said to himself: "Not only is this Contessa Pietranera a charming woman; but when I spend the evening in her box I manage to forget certain things at Parma the memory of which cuts me to the heart." — This Minister, in spite of his frivolous air and his polished manners, was not blessed with a soul of the French type; he could not forget the things that annoyed him. When there was a thorn in his pillow, he was obliged to break it off and .to blunt its point by repeated stabbings of his throbbing limbs. (I must apologise for the last two sentences, which are translated from the Italian.) On the morrow of this discovery, the Conte found that, notwithstanding the business that had summoned him to Milan, the day spun itself out to an enormous length; he could not stay in one place, he wore out his carriage-horses. About six o'clock he mounted his saddle-horse to ride to the Corso; he had some hope of meeting Signora Pietranera there; seeing no sign of her, he remembered that at eight o'clock the Scala Theatre opened; he entered it, and did not see ten persons in that immense auditorium. He felt somewhat ashamed of himself for being there. "Is it possible," he asked himself, "that at forty-five and past I am committing follies at which a sub-lieutenant would blush? Fortunately nobody suspects them." He fled, and tried to pass the time by strolling up and down the attractive streets that surround the Scala. They are lined with caffè which at that hour are filled to overflowing with people. Outside each of these caffè crowds of curious idlers perched on chairs in the middle of the street sip ices and criticise the passers-by. The Conte was a

passer-by of importance; at once he had the pleasure of being recognised and addressed. Three or four importunate persons of the kind that one cannot easily shake off seized this opportunity to obtain an audience of so powerful a Minister. Two of them handed him petitions; the third was content with pouring out a stream of long-winded advice as to his political conduct.

“One does not sleep,” he said to himself, “when one has such a brain; one ought not to walk about when one is so powerful.” He returned to the theatre, where it occurred to him that he might take a box in the third tier; from there his gaze could plunge, unnoticed by anyone, into the box in the second tier in which he hoped to see the Contessa arrive. Two full hours of waiting did not seem any too long to this lover; certain of not being seen he abandoned himself joyfully to the full extent of his folly. “Old age,” he said to himself, “is not that, more than anything else, the time when one is no longer capable of these delicious puerilities?”

Finally the Contessa appeared. Armed with his glasses, he studied her with rapture: “Young, brilliant, light as a bird,” he said to himself, “she is not twenty-five. Her beauty is the least of her charms: where else could one find that soul, always sincere, which never acts with prudence, which abandons itself entirely to the impression of the moment, which asks only to be carried away towards some new goal? I can understand Conte Nani’s foolish behaviour.”

The Conte supplied himself with excellent reasons for behaving foolishly, so long as he was thinking only of capturing the happiness which he saw before his eyes. He did not find any quite so satisfactory when he came to consider his age and the anxieties, sometimes of the saddest nature, that burdened his life. “A man of ability, whose spirit has been destroyed by fear, gives me a sumptuous life and plenty of money to be his Minister; but were he to dismiss me tomorrow, I should be left old and poor, that is to say everything that the world despises most; there’s a fine partner to offer the Contessa!” These thoughts were too dark, he came back to Signora Pietranera; he could not tire of gazing at her, and, to be able to think of her better, did not go down to her box. “Her only reason for taking Nani, they tell me, was to put that imbecile Limercati in his place when he could not be prevailed upon to run a sword, or to hire someone else to stick a dagger into her husband’s murderer. I would fight for her twenty times over!” cried the Conte in a

transport of enthusiasm. Every moment he consulted the theatre clock which, with illuminated figures upon a black background, warned the audience every five minutes of the approach of the hour at which it was permissible for them to visit a friend's box. The Conte said to himself: "I cannot spend more than half an hour at the most in the box, seeing that I have known her so short a time; if I stay longer, I shall attract attention, and, thanks to my age and even more to this accursed powder on my hair, I shall have all the bewitching allurements of a Cassandra." But a sudden thought made up his mind once and for all. "If she were to leave that box to pay someone else a visit, I should be well rewarded for the avarice with which I am hoarding up this pleasure." He rose to go down to the box in which he could see the Contessa; all at once he found that he had lost almost all his desire to present himself to her.

"Ah! this is really charming," he exclaimed with a smile at his own expense, and coming to a halt on the staircase; "an impulse of genuine shyness! It must be at least five and twenty years since an adventure of this sort last came my way."

He entered the box, almost with an effort to control himself; and, making the most, like a man of spirit, of the condition in which he found himself, made no attempt to appear at ease, or to display his wit by plunging into some entertaining story; he had the courage to be shy, he employed his wits in letting his disturbance be apparent without making himself ridiculous. "If she should take it amiss," he said to himself, "I am lost for ever. What! Shy, with my hair covered with powder, hair which, without the disguise of the powder, would be visibly grey! But, after all, it is a fact; it cannot therefore be absurd unless I exaggerate it or make a boast of it." The Contessa had spent so many weary hours at the castle of Grianta, facing the powdered heads of her brother and nephew, and of various politically sound bores of the neighbourhood, that it never occurred to her to give a thought to her new adorer's style in hairdressing.

The Contessa's mind having this protection against the impulse to laugh on his entry, she paid attention only to the news from France which Mosca always had for her in detail, on coming to her box; no doubt he used to invent it. As she discussed this news with him, she noticed this evening the expression in his eyes, which was good and kindly.

“I can imagine,” she said to him, “that at Parma, among your slaves, you will not wear that friendly expression; it would ruin everything and give them some hope of not being hanged!”

The entire absence of any sense of self-importance in a man who passed as the first diplomat in Italy seemed strange to the Contessa; she even found a certain charm in it. Moreover, as he talked well and with warmth, she was not at all displeased that he should have thought fit to take upon himself for one evening, without ulterior consequences, the part of squire of dames.

It was a great step forward, and highly dangerous; fortunately for the Minister, who, at Parma, never met a cruel fair, the Contessa had arrived from Grianta only a few days before: her mind was still stiff with the boredom of a country life. She had almost forgotten how to make fun; and all those things that appertain to a light and elegant way of living had assumed in her eyes as it were a tint of novelty which made them sacred; she was in no mood to laugh at anyone, even a lover of forty-five, and shy. A week later, the Conte’s temerity might have met with a very different sort of welcome.

At the Scala, it is not usual to prolong for more than twenty minutes or so these little visits to one’s friends’ boxes; the Conte spent the whole evening in the box in which he had been so fortunate as to meet Signora Pietranera. “She is a woman,” he said to himself, “who revives in me all the follies of my youth!” But he was well aware of the danger. “Will my position as an all-powerful Bashaw in a place forty leagues away induce her to pardon me this stupid behaviour? I get so bored at Parma!” Meanwhile, every quarter of an hour, he registered a mental vow to get up and go.

“I must explain to you, Signora,” he said to the Contessa with a laugh, “that at Parma I am bored to death, and I ought to be allowed to drink my fill of pleasure when the cup comes my way. So, without involving you in anything and simply for this evening, permit me to play the part of lover in your company. Alas, in a few days I shall be far away from this box which makes me forget every care and indeed, you will say, every convention.”

A week after this monstrous visit to the Contessa’s box, and after a series of minor incidents the narration of which here would perhaps seem tedious,

Conte Mosca was absolutely mad with love, and the Contessa had already begun to think that his age need offer no objection if the suitor proved attractive in other ways. They had reached this stage when Mosca was recalled by a courier from Parma. One would have said that his Prince was afraid to be left alone. The Contessa returned to Grianta; her imagination no longer serving to adorn that lovely spot, it appeared to her a desert. “Should I be attached to this man?” she asked herself. Mosca wrote to her, and had not to play a part; absence had relieved him of the source of all his anxious thoughts; his letters were amusing, and, by a little piece of eccentricity which was not taken amiss, to escape the comments of the Marchese del Dongo, who did not like having to pay for the carriage of letters, he used to send couriers who would post his at Como or Lecco or Varese or some other of those charming little places on the shores of the lake. This was done with the idea that the courier might be employed to take back her replies. The move was successful.

Soon the days when the couriers came were events in the Contessa’s life; these couriers brought her flowers, fruit, little presents of no value, which amused her, however, and her sister-in-law as well. Her memory of the Conte was blended with her idea of his great power; the Contessa had become curious to know everything that people said of him; the Liberals themselves paid a tribute to his talents.

The principal source of the Conte’s reputation for evil was that he passed as the head of the Ultra Party at the Court of Parma, while the Liberal Party had at its head an intriguing woman capable of anything, even of succeeding, the Marchesa Raversi, who was immensely rich. The Prince made a great point of not discouraging that one of the two parties which happened not to be in power; he knew quite well that he himself would always be the master, even with a Ministry formed in Signora Raversi’s drawing-room. Endless details of these intrigues were reported at Grianta. The bodily absence of Mosca, whom everyone described as a Minister of supreme talent and a man of action, made it possible not to think any more of his powdered head, a symbol of everything that is dull and sad; it was a detail of no consequence, one of the obligations of the court at which, moreover, he was playing so distinguished a part. “It is a ridiculous thing, a court,” said the Contessa to the Marchesa, “but it is amusing; it is a game that it is interesting to play, but one must agree to the rules. Who ever thought of protesting against the

absurdity of the rules of piquet? And yet, once you are accustomed to the rules, it is delightful to beat your adversary with repique and capot."

The Contessa often thought about the writer of these entertaining letters; the days on which she received them were delightful to her; she would take her boat and go to read them in one of the charming spots by the lake, the Pliniana, Belan, the wood of the Sfrondata. These letters seemed to console her to some extent for Fabrizio's absence. She could not, at all events, refuse to allow the Conte to be deeply in love; a month had not passed before she was thinking of him with tender affection. For his part, Conte Mosca was almost sincere when he offered to hand in his resignation, to leave the Ministry and to come and spend the rest of his life with her at Milan or elsewhere. "I have 400,000 francs," he added, "which will always bring us in an income of 15,000."—"A box at the play again, horses, everything," thought the Contessa; they were pleasant dreams. The sublime beauty of the different views of the Lake of Como began to charm her once more. She went down to dream by its shores of this return to a brilliant and distinctive life, which, most unexpectedly, seemed to be coming within the bounds of possibility. She saw herself on the Corso, at Milan, happy and gay as in the days of the Viceroy: "Youth, or at any rate a life of action, would begin again for me."

Sometimes her ardent imagination concealed things from her, but never did she have those deliberate illusions which cowardice induces. She was above all things a woman who was honest with herself. "If I am a little too old to be doing foolish things," she said to herself, "envy, which creates illusions as love does, may poison my stay in Milan for me. After my husband's death, my noble poverty was a success, as was my refusal of two vast fortunes. My poor little Conte Mosca had not a twentieth part of the opulence that was cast at my feet by those two worms, Limercati and Nani. The meagre widow's pension which I had to struggle to obtain, the dismissal of my servants, which made some sensation, the little fifth-floor room, which brought a score of carriages to the door, all went to form at the time a striking spectacle. But I shall have unpleasant moments, however skilfully I may handle things, if, never possessing any fortune beyond my widow's pension, I go back to live at Milan on the snug little middle-class comfort which we can secure with the 15,000 lire that Mosca will have left after he retires. One strong objection, out of which envy will forge a terrible weapon,

is that the Conte, although separated long ago from his wife, is still a married man. This separation is known at Parma, but at Milan it will come as news, and they will put it down to me. So, my dear Scala, my divine Lake of Como, adieu! adieu!"

In spite of all these forebodings, if the Contessa had had the smallest income of her own she would have accepted Mosca's offer to resign his office. She regarded herself as a middle-aged woman, and the idea of the court alarmed her; but what will appear in the highest degree improbable on this side of the Alps is that the Conte would have handed in that resignation gladly. So, at least, he managed to make his friend believe. In all his letters he implored, with an ever increasing frenzy, a second interview at Milan; it was granted him. "To swear that I feel an insane passion for you," the Contessa said to him one day at Milan, "would be a lie; I should be only too glad to love today at thirty odd as I used to love at two and twenty! But I have seen so many things decay that I had imagined to be eternal! I have the most tender regard for you, I place an unbounded confidence in you, and of all the men I know, you are the one I like best." The Contessa believed herself to be perfectly sincere; and yet, in the final clause, this declaration embodied a tiny falsehood. Fabrizio, perhaps, had he chosen, might have triumphed over every rival in her heart. But Fabrizio was nothing more than a boy in Conte Mosca's eyes: he himself reached Milan three days after the young hothead's departure for Novara, and he hastened to intercede on his behalf with Barone Binder. The Conte considered that his exile was now irrevocable.

He had not come to Milan alone; he had in his carriage the Duca Sanseverina–Taxis, a handsome little old man of sixty-eight, dapple-grey, very polished, very neat, immensely rich but not quite as noble as he ought to have been. It was his grandfather, only, who had amassed millions from the office of Farmer General of the Revenues of the State of Parma. His father had had himself made Ambassador of the Prince of Parma to the Court of —— , by advancing the following argument: "Your Highness allots 30,000 francs to his Representative at the Court of —— , where he cuts an extremely modest figure. Should Your Highness deign to appoint me to the post, I will accept 6,000 francs as salary. My expenditure at the Court of —— will never fall below 100,000 francs a year, and my agent will pay over 20,000 francs every year to the Treasurer for Foreign Affairs at Parma. With that sum they can attach to me whatever Secretary of Embassy they choose,

and I shall shew no curiosity to inquire into diplomatic secrets, if there are any. My object is to shed lustre on my house, which is still a new one, and to give it the distinction of having filled one of the great public offices."

The present Duca, this Ambassador's son and heir, had made the stupid mistake of coming out as a semi-Liberal, and for the last two years had been in despair. In Napoleon's time, he had lost two or three millions owing to his obstinacy in remaining abroad, and even now, after the re-establishment of order in Europe, he had not managed to secure a certain Grand Cordon which adorned the portrait of his father. The want of this Cordon was killing him by inches.

At the degree of intimacy which in Italy follows love, there was no longer any obstacle in the nature of vanity between the lovers. It was therefore with the most perfect simplicity that Mosca said to the woman he adored:

"I have two or three plans of conduct to offer you, all pretty well thought out; I have been thinking of nothing else for the last three months.

"First: I hand in my resignation, and we retire to a quiet life at Milan or Florence or Naples or wherever you please. We have an income of 15,000 francs, apart from the Prince's generosity, which will continue for some time, more or less.

"Secondly: You condescend to come to the place in which I have some authority; you buy a property, Sacca, for example, a charming house in the middle of a forest, commanding the valley of the Po; you can have the contract signed within a week from now. The Prince then attaches you to his court. But here I can see an immense objection. You will be well received at court; no one would think of refusing, with me there; besides, the Princess imagines she is unhappy, and I have recently rendered her certain services with an eye to your future. But I must remind you of one paramount objection: the Prince is a bigoted churchman, and, as you already know, ill luck will have it that I am a married man. From which will arise a million minor unpleasantnesses. You are a widow; it is a fine title which would have to be exchanged for another, and this brings me to my third proposal.

“One might find a new husband who would not be a nuisance. But first of all he would have to be considerably advanced in years, for why should you deny me the hope of some day succeeding him? Very well, I have made this curious arrangement with the Duca Sanseverina–Taxis, who, of course, does not know the name of his future Duchessa. He knows only that she will make him an Ambassador and will procure him the Grand Cordon which his father had and the lack of which makes him the most unhappy of mortals. Apart from this, the Duca is by no means an absolute idiot; he gets his clothes and wigs from Paris. He is not in the least the sort of man who would do anything deliberately mean, he seriously believes that honour consists in his having a Cordon, and he is ashamed of his riches. He came to me a year ago proposing to found a hospital, in order to get this Cordon; I laughed at him then, but he did not by any means laugh at me when I made him a proposal of marriage; my first condition was, you can understand, that he must never set foot again in Parma.”

“But do you know that what you are proposing is highly immoral?” said the Contessa.

“No more immoral than everything else that is done at our court and a score of others. Absolute Power has this advantage, that it sanctifies everything in the eyes of the public: what harm can there be in a thing that nobody notices? Our policy for the next twenty years is going to consist in fear of the Jacobins — and such fear, too! Every year, we shall fancy ourselves on the eve of ‘93. You will hear, I hope, the fine speeches I make on the subject at my receptions! They are beautiful! Everything that can in any way reduce this fear will be supremely moral in the eyes of the nobles and the bigots. And you see, at Parma, everyone who is not either a noble or a bigot is in prison, or is packing up to go there; you may be quite sure that this marriage will not be thought odd among us until the day on which I am disgraced. This arrangement involves no dishonesty towards anyone; that is the essential thing, it seems to me. The Prince, on whose favour we are trading, has placed only one condition on his consent, which is that the future Duchessa shall be of noble birth. Last year my office, all told, brought me in 107,000 francs; my total income would therefore be 122,000; I invested 20,000 at Lyons. Very well, chose for yourself; either a life of luxury based on our having 122,000 francs to spend, which, at Parma, go as far as at least 400,000 at Milan, but with this marriage which will give you the name of a

passable man on whom you will never set eyes after you leave the altar; or else the simple middle-class existence on 15,000 francs at Florence or Naples, for I am of your opinion, you have been too much admired at Milan; we should be persecuted here by envy, which might perhaps succeed in souring our tempers. Our grand life at Parma will, I hope, have some touches of novelty, even in your eyes, which have seen the court of Prince Eugène; you would be wise to try it before shutting the door on it for ever. Do not think that I am seeking to influence your opinion. As for me, my mind is quite made up: I would rather live on a fourth floor with you than continue that grand life by myself."

The possibility of this strange marriage was debated by the loving couple every day. The Contessa saw the Duca Sanseverina–Taxis at the Scala Ball, and thought him highly presentable. In one of their final conversations, Mosca summed up his proposals in the following words: "We must take some decisive action if we wish to spend the rest of our lives in an enjoyable fashion and not grow old before our time. The Prince has given his approval; Sanseverina is a person who might easily be worse; he possesses the finest palazzo in Parma, and a boundless fortune; he is sixty-eight, and has an insane passion for the Grand Cordon; but there is one great stain on his character: he once paid 10,000 francs for a bust of Napoleon by Canova. His second sin, which will be the death of him if you do not come to his rescue, is that he lent 25 napoleons to Ferrante Palla, a lunatic of our country but also something of a genius, whom we have since sentenced to death, fortunately in his absence. This Ferrante has written a couple of hundred lines in his time which are like nothing in the world; I will repeat them to you, they are as fine as Dante. The Prince then sends Sanseverina to the Court of —— , he marries you on the day of his departure, and in the second year of his stay abroad, which he calls an Embassy, he receives the Grand Cordon of the —— , without which he cannot live. You will have in him a brother who will give you no trouble at all; he signs all the papers I require in advance, and besides you will see nothing of him, or as little as you choose. He asks for nothing better than never to shew his face at Parma, where his grandfather the tax-gatherer and his own profession of Liberalism stand in his way. Rassi, our hangman, makes out that the Duca was a secret subscriber to the Constitutionnel through Ferrante Palla the poet, and this slander was for a long time a serious obstacle in the way of the Prince's consent."

Why should the historian who follows faithfully all the most trivial details of the story that has been told him be held responsible? Is it his fault if his characters, led astray by passions which he, unfortunately for himself, in no way shares, descend to conduct that is profoundly unmoral? It is true that things of this sort are no longer done in a country where the sole passion that has outlived all the rest is that for money, as an excuse for vanity.

Three months after the events we have just related, the Duchessa Sanseverina–Taxis astonished the court of Parma by her easy affability and the noble serenity of her mind; her house was beyond comparison the most attractive in the town. This was what Conte Mosca had promised his master. Ranuccio–Ernesto IV, the Reigning Prince, and the Princess his Consort, to whom she was presented by two of the greatest ladies in the land, gave her a most marked welcome. The Duchessa was curious to see this Prince, master of the destiny of the man she loved, she was anxious to please him, and in this was more than successful. She found a man of tall stature but inclined to stoutness; his hair, his moustache, his enormous whiskers were of a fine gold, according to his courtiers; elsewhere they had provoked, by their faded tint, the ignoble word flaxen. From the middle of a plump face there projected to no distance at all a tiny nose that was almost feminine. But the Duchessa observed that, in order to notice all these points of ugliness, one had first to attempt to catalogue the Prince's features separately. Taken as a whole, he had the air of a man of sense and of firm character. His carriage, his way of holding himself were by no means devoid of majesty, but often he sought to impress the person he was addressing; at such times he grew embarrassed himself, and fell into an almost continuous swaying motion from one leg to the other. For the rest, Ernesto IV had a piercing and commanding gaze; his gestures with his arms had nobility, and his speech was at once measured and concise.

Mosca had warned the Duchessa that the Prince had, in the large cabinet in which he gave audiences, a full-length portrait of Louis XIV, and a very fine table by Scagliola of Florence. She found the imitation striking; evidently he sought to copy the gaze and the noble utterance of Louis XIV, and he leaned upon the Scagliola table so as to give himself the pose of Joseph II. He sat down as soon as he had uttered his greeting to the Duchessa, to give her an opportunity to make use of the tabouret befitting her rank. At this court, duchesses, princesses, and the wives of Grandees of Spain alone have the

right to sit; other women wait until the Prince or Princess invites them; and, to mark the difference in rank, these August Personages always take care to allow a short interval to elapse before inviting the ladies who are not duchesses to be seated. The Duchessa found that at certain moments the imitation of Louis XIV was a little too strongly marked in the Prince; for instance, in his way of smiling good-naturedly and throwing back his head.

Ernesto IV wore an evening coat in the latest fashion, that had come from Paris; every month he had sent to him from that city, which he abhorred, an evening coat, a frock coat, and a hat. But by an odd blend of costume, on the day on which the Duchessa was received he had put on red breeches, silk stockings and very close-fitting shoes, models for which might be found in the portraits of Joseph II.

He received Signora Sanseverina graciously; the things he said to her were shrewd and witty; but she saw quite plainly that there was no superfluity of warmth in his reception of her.—"Do you know why?" said Conte Mosca on her return from the audience, "it is because Milan is a larger and finer city than Parma. He was afraid, had he given you the welcome that I expected and he himself had led me to hope, of seeming like a provincial in ecstasies before the charms of a beautiful lady who has come down from the capital. No doubt, too, he is still upset by a detail which I hardly dare mention to you; the Prince sees at his court no woman who can vie with you in beauty. Yesterday evening, when he retired to bed, that was his sole topic of conversation with Pernice, his principal valet, who is good enough to confide in me. I foresee a little revolution in etiquette; my chief enemy at this court is a fool who goes by the name of General Fabio Conti. Just imagine a creature who has been on active service for perhaps one day in his life, and sets out from that day to copy the bearing of Frederick the Great. In addition to which, he aims also at copying the noble affability of General La Fayette, and that because he is the leader, here, of the Liberal Party (God knows what sort of Liberals!)."

"I know your Fabio Conti," said the Duchessa; "I had a good view of him once near Como; he was quarrelling with the police." She related the little adventure which the reader may perhaps remember.

“You will learn one day, Signora, if your mind ever succeeds in penetrating the intricacies of our etiquette, that young ladies do not appear at court here until after their marriage. At the same time, the Prince has, for the superiority of his city of Parma over all others, a patriotism so ardent that I would wager that he will find some way of having little Clelia Conti, our La Fayette’s daughter, presented to him. She is charming, upon my soul she is; and was still reckoned, a week ago, the best-looking person in the States of the Prince.

“I do not know,” the Conte went on, “whether the horrors that the enemies of our Sovereign have disseminated against him have reached the castle of Grianta; they make him out a monster, an ogre. The truth is that Ernesto IV was full of dear little virtues, and one may add that, had he been invulnerable like Achilles, he would have continued to be the model of a potentate. But in a moment of boredom and anger, and also a little in imitation of Louis XIV cutting off the head of some hero or other of the Fronde, who was discovered living in peaceful solitude on a plot of land near Versailles, fifty years after the Fronde, one fine day Ernesto IV had two Liberals hanged. It seems that these rash fellows used to meet on fixed days to speak evil of the Prince and address ardent prayers to heaven that the plague might visit Parma and deliver them from the tyrant. The word tyrant was proved. Rassi called this conspiracy; he had them sentenced to death, and the execution of one of them, Conte L —— ., was atrocious. All this happened before my time. Since that fatal hour,” the Conte went on, lowering his voice, “the Prince has been subject to fits of panic unworthy of a man, but these are the sole source of the favour that I enjoy. But for this royal fear, mine would be a kind of merit too abrupt, too harsh for this court, where idiocy runs rampant. Would you believe that the Prince looks under the beds in his room before going to sleep, and spends a million, which at Parma is the equivalent of four millions at Milan, to have a good police force; and you see before you, Signora Duchessa, the Chief of that terrible Police. By the police, that is to say by fear, I have become Minister of War and Finance; and as the Minister of the Interior is my nominal chief, in so far as he has the police under his jurisdiction, I have had that portfolio given to Conte Zurla–Contarini, an imbecile who is a glutton for work and gives himself the pleasure of writing eighty letters a day. I received one only this morning on which Conte Zurla–Contarini has had the satisfaction of writing with his own hand the number 20,715.”

The Duchessa Sanseverina was presented to the melancholy Princess of Parma, Clara–Paolina, who, because her husband had a mistress (quite an attractive woman, the Marchesa Balbi), imagined herself to be the most unhappy person in the universe, a belief which had made her perhaps the most trying. The Duchessa found a very tall and very thin woman, who was not thirty-six and appeared fifty. A symmetrical and noble face might have passed as beautiful, though somewhat spoiled by the large round eyes which could barely see, if the Princess had not herself abandoned every attempt at beauty. She received the Duchessa with a shyness so marked that certain courtiers, enemies of Conte Mosca, ventured to say that the Princess looked like the woman who was being presented and the Duchessa like the sovereign. The Duchessa, surprised and almost disconcerted, could find no language that would put her in a place inferior to that which the Princess assumed for herself. To restore some self-possession to this poor Princess, who at heart was not wanting in intelligence, the Duchessa could think of nothing better than to begin, and keep going, a long dissertation on botany. The Princess was really learned in this science; she had some very fine hothouses with quantities of tropical plants. The Duchessa, while seeking simply for a way out of a difficult position, made a lifelong conquest of Princess Clara–Paolina, who, from the shy and speechless creature that she had been at the beginning of the audience, found herself towards the end so much at her ease that, in defiance of all the rules of etiquette, this first audience lasted for no less than an hour and a quarter. Next day, the Duchessa sent out to purchase some exotic plants, and posed as a great lover of botany.

The Princess spent all her time with the venerable Father Landriani, Archbishop of Parma, a man of learning, a man of intelligence even, and a perfectly honest man, but one who presented a singular spectacle when he was seated in his chair of crimson velvet (it was the privilege of his office) opposite the armchair of the Princess, surrounded by her maids of honour and her two ladies of company. The old prelate, with his flowing white locks, was even more timid, were such a thing possible, than the Princess; they saw one another every day, and every audience began with a silence that lasted fully a quarter of an hour. To such a state had they come that the Contessa Alvizi, one of the ladies of company, had become a sort of favourite, because she possessed the art of encouraging them to talk and so breaking the silence.

To end the series of presentations, the Duchessa was admitted to the presence of H.S.H. the Crown Prince, a personage of taller stature than his father and more timid than his mother. He was learned in mineralogy, and was sixteen years old. He blushed excessively on seeing the Duchessa come in, and was so put off his balance that he could not think of a word to say to that beautiful lady. He was a fine-looking young man, and spent his life in the woods, hammer in hand. At the moment when the Duchessa rose to bring this silent audience to an end:

“My God! Signora, how pretty you are!” exclaimed the Crown Prince; a remark which was not considered to be in too bad taste by the lady presented.

The Marchesa Balbi, a young woman of five-and-twenty, might still have passed for the most perfect type of leggiadria italiana, two or three years before the arrival of the Duchessa Sanseverina at Parma. As it was, she had still the finest eyes in the world and the most charming airs, but, viewed close at hand, her skin was netted with countless fine little wrinkles which made the Marchesa look like a young grandmother. Seen from a certain distance, in the theatre for instance, in her box, she was still a beauty, and the people in the pit thought that the Prince shewed excellent taste. He spent every evening with the Marchesa Balbi, but often without opening his lips, and the boredom she saw on the Prince’s face had made this poor woman decline into an extraordinary thinness. She laid claim to an unlimited subtlety, and was always smiling a bitter smile; she had the prettiest teeth in the world, and in season and out, having little or no sense, would attempt by an ironical smile to give some hidden meaning to her words. Conte Mosca said that it was these continual smiles, while inwardly she was yawning, that gave her all her wrinkles. The Balbi had a finger in every pie, and the State never made a contract for 1,000 francs without there being some little ricordo (this was the polite expression at Parma) for the Marchesa. Common report would have it that she had invested six millions in England, but her fortune, which indeed was of recent origin, did not in reality amount to 1,500,000 francs. It was to be out of reach of her stratagems, and to have her dependent upon himself, that Conte Mosca had made himself Minister of Finance. The Marchesa’s sole passion was fear disguised in sordid avarice: “ shall die on straw!” she used occasionally to say to the Prince, who was shocked by such a remark. The Duchessa noticed that the ante-room,

resplendent with gilding, of the Balbi's palazzo, was lighted by a single candle which guttered on a priceless marble table, and that the doors of her drawing-room were blackened by the footmen's fingers.

"She received me," the Duchessa told her lover, "as though she expected me to offer her a gratuity of 50 francs."

The course of the Duchessa's successes was slightly interrupted by the reception given her by the shrewdest woman of the court, the celebrated Marchesa Raversi, a consummate intriguer who had established herself at the head of the party opposed to that of Conte Mosca. She was anxious to overthrow him, all the more so in the last few months, since she was the niece of the Duca Sanseverina, and was afraid of seeing her prospects impaired by the charms of his new Duchessa. "The Raversi is by no means a woman to be ignored," the Conte told his mistress; "I regard her as so far capable of sticking at nothing that I separated from my wife solely because she insisted on taking as her lover Cavaliere Bentivoglio, a friend of the Raversi." This lady, a tall virago with very dark hair, remarkable for the diamonds which she wore all day, and the rouge with which she covered her cheeks, had declared herself in advance the Duchessa's enemy, and when she received her in her own house made it her business to open hostilities. The Duca Sanseverina, in the letters he wrote from —— , appeared so delighted with his Embassy and, above all, with the prospect of the Grand Cordon, that his family were afraid of his leaving part of his fortune to his wife, whom he loaded with little presents. The Raversi, although definitely ugly, had for a lover Conte Baldi, the handsomest man at court; generally speaking, she was successful in all her undertakings.

The Duchessa lived in the greatest style imaginable. The palazzo Sanseverina had always been one of the most magnificent in the city of Parma, and the Duca, to celebrate the occasion of his Embassy and his future Grand Cordon, was spending enormous sums upon its decoration; the Duchessa directed the work in person.

The Conte had guessed aright; a few days after the presentation of the Duchessa, young Clelia Conti came to court; she had been made a Canoness. In order to parry the blow which this favour might be thought to have struck at the Conte's influence, the Duchessa gave a party, on the pretext of

throwing open the new garden of her palazzo, and by the exercise of her most charming manners made Clelia, whom she called her young friend of the Lake of Como, the queen of the evening. Her monogram was displayed, as though by accident, upon the principal transparencies. The young Clelia, although slightly pensive, was pleasant in the way in which she spoke of the little adventure by the Lake, and of her warm gratitude. She was said to be deeply religious and very fond of solitude. “I would wager,” said the Conte, “that she has enough sense to be ashamed of her father.” The Duchessa made a friend of this girl; she felt attracted towards her, she did not wish to appear jealous, and included her in all her pleasure parties; after all, her plan was to seek to diminish all the enmities of which the Conte was the object.

Everything smiled on the Duchessa; she was amused by this court existence where a sudden storm is always to be feared; she felt as though she were beginning life over again. She was tenderly attached to the Conte, who was literally mad with happiness. The pleasing situation had bred in him an absolute impassivity towards everything in which only his professional interests were concerned. And so, barely two months after the Duchessa’s arrival, he obtained the patent and honours of Prime Minister, honours which come very near to those paid to the Sovereign himself. The Conte had complete control of his master’s will; they had a proof of this at Parma by which everyone was impressed.

To the southeast, and within ten minutes of the town rises that famous citadel so renowned throughout Italy, the main tower of which stands one hundred and eighty feet high and is visible from so far. This tower, constructed on the model of Hadrian’s Tomb, at Rome, by the Farnese, grandsons of Paul III, in the first half of the sixteenth century, is so large in diameter that on the platform in which it ends it has been possible to build a palazzo for the governor of the citadel and a new prison called the Farnese tower. This prison, erected in honour of the eldest son of Ranuccio–Ernesto II, who had become the accepted lover of his step-mother, is regarded as a fine and singular monument throughout the country. The Duchessa was curious to see it; on the day of her visit the heat was overpowering in Parma, and up there, in that lofty position, she found fresh air, which so delighted her that she stayed for several hours. The officials made a point of throwing open to her the rooms of the Farnese tower.

The Duchessa met on the platform of the great tower a poor Liberal prisoner who had come to enjoy the half-hour's outing that .was allowed him every third day. On her return to Parma, not having yet acquired the discretion necessary in an absolute court, she spoke of this man, who had told her the whole history of his life. The Marchesa Raversi's party seized hold of these utterances of the Duchessa and repeated them broadcast, greatly hoping that they would shock the Prince. Indeed, Ernesto IV was in the habit of repeating that the essential thing was to impress the imagination. "Perpetual is a big word," he used to say, "and more terrible in Italy than elsewhere": accordingly, never in his life had he granted a pardon. A week after her visit to the fortress the Duchessa received a letter commuting a sentence, signed by the Prince and by his Minister, with a blank left for the name. The prisoner whose name she chose to write in this space would obtain the restoration of his property, with permission to spend the rest of his days in America. The Duchessa wrote the name of the man who had talked to her. Unfortunately this man turned out to be half a rogue, a weak-kneed creature; it was on the strength of his confession that the famous Ferrante Palla had been sentenced to death.

The unprecedented nature of this pardon set the seal upon Signora Sanseverina's position. Conte Mosca was wild with delight; it was a great day in his life and one that had a decisive influence on Fabrizio's destiny. He, meanwhile, was still at Romagnano, near Novara, going to confession, hunting, reading nothing, and paying court to a lady of noble birth, as was laid down in his instructions. The Duchessa was still a trifle shocked by this last essential. Another sign which boded no good to the Conte was that, while she would speak to him with the utmost frankness about everyone else, and would think aloud in his presence, she never mentioned Fabrizio to him without first carefully choosing her words.

"If you like," the Conte said to her one day, "I will write to that charming brother you have on the Lake of Como, and I will soon force that Marchese del Dongo, if I and my friends in a certain quarter apply a little pressure, to ask for the pardon of your dear Fabrizio. If it be true, as I have not the least doubt that it is, that Fabrizio is somewhat superior to the young fellows who ride their English thoroughbreds about the streets of Milan, what a life, at eighteen, to be doing nothing with no prospect of ever having anything to do! If heaven had endowed him with a real passion for anything in the

world, were it only for angling, I should respect it; but what is he to do at Milan, even after he has obtained his pardon? He will get on a horse, which he will have had sent to him from England, at a certain hour of the day; at another, idleness will take him to his mistress, for whom he will care less than he will for his horse. . . . But, if you say the word, I will try to procure this sort of life for your nephew."

"I should like him to be an officer," said the Duchessa.

"Would you recommend a Sovereign to entrust a post which, at a given date, may be of some importance to a young man who, in the first place, is liable to enthusiasm, and, secondly, has shewn enthusiasm for Napoleon to the extent of going to join him at Waterloo? Just think where we should all be if Napoleon had won at Waterloo! We should have no Liberals to be afraid of, it is true, but the Sovereigns of ancient Houses would be able to keep their thrones only by marrying the daughters of his Marshals. And so military life for Fabrizio would be the life of a squirrel in a revolving cage: plenty of movement with no progress. He would have the annoyance of seeing himself cut out by all sorts of plebeian devotion. The essential quality in a young man of the present day, that is to say for the next fifty years perhaps, so long as we remain in a state of fear and religion has not been re-established, is not to be liable to enthusiasm and not to shew any spirit.

"I have thought of one thing, but one that will begin by making you cry out in protest, and will give me infinite trouble for many a day to come: it is an act of folly which I am ready to commit for you. But tell me, if you can, what folly would I not commit to win a smile?"

"Well?" said the Duchessa.

"Well, we have had as Archbishops of Parma three members of your family: Ascanio del Dongo who wrote a book in sixteen-something, Fabrizio in 1699, and another Ascanio in 1740. If Fabrizio cares to enter the prelacy, and to make himself conspicuous for virtues of the highest order, I can make him a Bishop somewhere, and then Archbishop here, provided that my influence lasts. The real objection is this: shall I remain Minister for long enough to carry out this fine plan, which will require several years? The Prince may

die, he may have the bad taste to dismiss me. But, after all, it is the only way open to me of securing for Fabrizio something that is worthy of you."

They discussed the matter at length: the idea was highly repugnant to the Duchessa.

"Prove to me again," she said to the Conte, "that every other career is impossible for Fabrizio." The Conte proved it.

"You regret," he added, "the brilliant uniform; but as to that, I do not know what to do."

After a month in which the Duchessa had asked to be allowed to think things over, she yielded with a sigh to the sage views of the Minister. "Either ride stiffly upon an English horse through the streets of some big town," repeated the Conte, "or adopt a calling that is not unbefitting his birth; I can see no middle course. Unfortunately, a gentleman cannot become either a doctor or a barrister, and this age is made for barristers.

"Always bear in mind, Signora," the Conte went on, "that you are giving your nephew, on the streets of Milan, the lot enjoyed by the young men of his age who pass for the most fortunate. His pardon once procured, you will give him fifteen, twenty, thirty thousand francs; the amount does not matter; neither you nor I make any pretence of saving money."

The Duchessa was susceptible to the idea of fame; she did not wish Fabrizio to be simply a young man living on an allowance; she reverted to her lover's plan.

"Observe," the Conte said to her, "that I do not pretend to turn Fabrizio into an exemplary priest, like so many that you see. No, he is a great gentleman, first and foremost; he can remain perfectly ignorant if it seems good to him, and will none the less become Bishop and Archbishop, if the Prince continues to regard me as a useful person.

"If your orders deign to transform my proposal into an immutable decree," the Conte went on, "our protégé must on no account be seen in Parma living with modest means. His subsequent promotion will cause a scandal if people have seen him here as an ordinary priest; he ought not to appear in Parma

until he has his violet stockings† and a suitable establishment. Then everyone will assume that your nephew is destined to be a Bishop, and nobody will be shocked.

[† In Italy, young men with influence or brains become Monsignori and prelati, which does not mean bishop; they then wear violet stockings. A man need not take any vows to become Monsignore; he can discard his violet stockings and marry.]

"If you will take my advice, you will send Fabrizio to take his theology and spend three years at Naples. During the vacations of the Ecclesiastical Academy he can go if he likes to visit Paris and London, but he must never shew his face in Parma." This sentence made the Duchessa shudder.

She sent a courier to her nephew, asking him to meet her at Piacenza. Need it be said that this courier was the bearer of all the means of obtaining money and all the necessary passports?

Arriving first at Piacenza, Fabrizio hastened to meet the Duchessa, and embraced her with transports of joy which made her dissolve in tears. She was glad that the Conte was not present; since they had fallen in love, it was the first time that she had experienced this sensation.

Fabrizio was profoundly touched, and then distressed by the plans which the Duchessa had made for him; his hope had always been that, his affair at Waterloo settled, he might end by becoming a soldier. One thing struck the Duchessa, and still further increased the romantic opinion that she had formed of her nephew; he refused absolutely to lead a caffè-haunting existence in one of the big towns of Italy.

"Can't you see yourself on the Corso of Florence or Naples," said the Duchessa, "with thoroughbred English horses? For the evenings a carriage, a charming apartment," and so forth. She dwelt with exquisite relish on the details of this vulgar happiness, which she saw Fabrizio thrust from him with disdain. "He is a hero," she thought.

"And after ten years of this agreeable life, what shall I have done?" said Fabrizio; "what shall I be? A young man of a certain age, who will have to

move out of the way of the first good-looking boy who makes his appearance in society, also mounted upon an English horse."

Fabrizio at first utterly rejected the idea of the Church. He spoke of going to New York, of becoming an American citizen and a soldier of the Republic.

"What a mistake you are making! You won't have any war, and you'll fall back into the caffè life, only without smartness, without music, without love affairs," replied the Duchessa. "Believe me, for you just as much as for myself, it would be a wretched existence there in America." She explained to him the cult of the god Dollar, and the respect that had to be shewn to the artisans in the street who by their votes decided everything. They came back to the idea of the Church.

"Before you fly into a passion," the Duchessa said to him, "just try to understand what the Conte is asking you to do; there is no question whatever of your being a poor priest of more or less exemplary and virtuous life, like Priore Blanès. Remember the example of your uncles, the Archbishops of Parma; read over again the accounts of their lives in the supplement to the Genealogy. First and foremost, a man with a name like yours has to be a great gentleman, noble, generous, an upholder of justice, destined from the first to find himself at the head of his order . . . and in the whole of his life doing only one dishonourable thing, and that a very useful one."

"So all my illusions are shattered," said Fabrizio, heaving a deep sigh; "it is a cruel sacrifice! I admit, I had not taken into account this horror of enthusiasm and spirit, even when wielded to their advantage, which from now onwards is going to prevail amongst absolute monarchs."

"Remember that a proclamation, a caprice of the heart flings the enthusiast into the bosom of the opposite party to the one he has served all his life!"

"I an enthusiast!" repeated Fabrizio; "a strange accusation! I cannot manage even to be in love!"

"What!" exclaimed the Duchessa.

"When I have the honour to pay my court to a beauty, even if she is of good birth and sound religious principles, I cannot think about her except when I

see her."

This avowal made a strange impression upon the Duchessa.

"I ask for a month," Fabrizio went on, "in which to take leave of Signora C —— , of Novara, and, what will be more difficult still, of all the castles I have been building in the air all my life. I shall write to my mother, who will be so good as to come and see me at Belgirate, on the Piedmontese shore of Lake Maggiore, and, in thirty-one days from now, I shall be in Parma incognito."

"No, whatever you do!" cried the Duchessa. She did not wish Conte Mosca to see her talking to Fabrizio.

The same pair met again at Piacenza. The Duchessa this time was highly agitated: a storm had broken at court; the Marchesa Raversi's party was on the eve of a triumph; it was on the cards that Conte Mosca might be replaced by General Fabio Conti, the leader of what was called at Parma the Liberal Party. Omitting only the name of the rival who was growing in the Prince's favour, the Duchessa told Fabrizio everything. She discussed afresh the chances of his future career, even with the prospect of his losing the all-powerful influence of the Conte.

"I am going to spend three years in the Ecclesiastical Academy at Naples," exclaimed Fabrizio; "but since I must be before all things a young gentleman, and you do not oblige me to lead the life of a virtuous seminarist, the prospect of this stay at Naples does — not frighten me in the least; the life there will be in every way as pleasant as life at Romagnano; the best society of the neighbourhood was beginning to class me as a Jacobin. In my exile I have discovered that I know nothing, not even Latin, not even how to spell. I had planned to begin my education over again at Novara; I shall willingly study theology at Naples; it is a complicated science." The Duchessa was overjoyed. "If we are driven out of Parma," she told him, "we shall come and visit you at Naples. But since you agree, until further orders, to try for the violet stockings, the Conte, who knows the Italy of today through and through, has given me an idea to suggest to you. Believe or not, as you choose, what they teach you, but never raise any objection. Imagine that they are teaching you the rules of the game of whist; would you raise

any objection to the rules of whist? I have told the Conte that you do believe, and he is delighted to hear it; it is useful in this world and in the next. But, if you believe, do not fall into the vulgar habit of speaking with horror of Voltaire, Diderot, Raynal and all those harebrained Frenchmen who paved the way to the Dual Chamber. Their names should not be allowed to pass your lips, but if you must mention them, speak of these gentlemen with a calm irony: they are people who have long since been refuted and whose attacks are no longer of any consequence. Believe blindly everything that they tell you at the Academy. Bear in mind that there are people who will make a careful note of your slightest objections; they will forgive you a little amorous intrigue if it is done in the proper way, but not a doubt: age stifles intrigue but encourages doubt. Act on this principle at the tribunal of penitence. You shall have a letter of recommendation to a Bishop who is factotum to the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples: to him alone you should admit your escapade in France and your presence on the 18th of June in the neighbourhood of Waterloo. Even then, cut it as short as possible, confess it only so that they cannot reproach you with having kept it secret. You were so young at the time!

“The second idea which the Conte sends you is this: if there should occur to you a brilliant argument, a triumphant retort that will change the course of the conversation, do not give in to the temptation to shine; remain silent: people of any discernment will see your cleverness in your eyes. It will be time enough to be witty when you are a Bishop.”

Fabrizio began his life at Naples with an unpretentious carriage and four servants, good Milanese, whom his aunt had sent him. After a year of study, no one said of him that he was a man of parts: people looked upon him as a great nobleman, of a studious bent, extremely generous, but something of a libertine.

That year, amusing enough for Fabrizio, was terrible for the Duchessa. The Conte was three or four times within an inch of ruin; the Prince, more timorous than ever, because he was ill that year, believed that by dismissing him he could free himself from the odium of the executions carried out before the Conte had entered his service. Rassi was the cherished favourite who must at all costs be retained. The Conte’s perils won him the passionate attachment of the Duchessa; she gave no more thought to Fabrizio. To lend

colour to their possible retirement, it appeared that the air of Parma, which was indeed a trifle damp as it is everywhere in Lombardy, did not at all agree with her. Finally, after intervals of disgrace which went so far as to, make the Conte, though Prime Minister, spend sometimes twenty whole days without seeing his master privately, Mosca won; he secured the appointment of General Fabio Conti, the so-called Liberal, as governor of the citadel in which were imprisoned the Liberals condemned by Rassi. “If Conti shows any leniency towards his prisoners,” Mosca observed to his lady, “he will be disgraced as a Jacobin whose political theories have made him forget his duty as a general; if he shows himself stern and pitiless, and that, to my mind, is the direction in which he will tend, he ceases to be the leader of his own party and alienates all the families that have a relative in the citadel. This poor man has learned how to assume an air of awed respect on the approach of the Prince; if necessary, he changes his clothes four times a day; he can discuss a question of etiquette, but his is not a head capable of following the difficult path by which alone he can save himself from destruction; and in any case, I am there.”

The day after the appointment of General Fabio Conti, which brought the ministerial crisis to an end, it was announced that Parma was to have an ultra-monarchist newspaper.

“What feuds the paper will create!” said the Duchessa.

“This paper, the idea of which is perhaps my masterpiece,” replied the Conte with a smile, “I shall gradually and quite against my will allow to pass into the hands of the ultra-rabid section. I have attached some good salaries to the editorial posts. People are coming from all quarters to beg for employment on it; the excitement will help us through the next month or two, and people will forget the danger I have been in. Those seriously minded gentlemen P —— and D —— — are already on the list.”

“But this paper will be quite revoltingly absurd.”

“I am reckoning on that,” replied the Conte. “The Prince will read it every morning and admire the doctrines taught by myself as its founder. As to the details, he will approve or be shocked; of the hours which he devotes every day to work, two will be taken up in this way. The paper will get itself into

trouble, but when the serious complaints begin to come in, in eight or ten months' time, it will be entirely in the hands of the ultra-rabids. It will be this party, which is annoying me, that will have to answer; as for me, I shall raise objections to the paper; but after all I greatly prefer a hundred absurdities to one hanging. Who remembers an absurdity two years after the publication of the official gazette! It is better than having the sons and family of the hanged men vowing a hatred which will last as long as I shall and may perhaps shorten my life."

The Duchessa, always passionately interested in something, always active, never idle, had more spirit than the whole court of Parma put together; but she lacked the patience and impassivity necessary for success in intrigue. However, she had managed to follow with passionate excitement the interests of the various groups, she was beginning even to establish a certain personal reputation with the Prince. Clara–Paolina, the Princess Consort, surrounded with honours but a prisoner to the most antiquated etiquette, looked upon herself as the unhappiest of women. The Duchessa Sanseverina paid her various attentions and tried to prove to her that she was by no means so unhappy as she supposed. It should be explained that the Prince saw his wife only at dinner: this meal lasted for thirty minutes, and the Prince would spend whole weeks without saying a word to Clara–Paolina. Signora Sanseverina attempted to change all this; she amused the Prince, all the more as she had managed to retain her independence intact. Had she wished to do so, she could not have succeeded in never hurting any of the fools who swarmed about this court. It was this utter inadaptability on her part that led to her being execrated by the common run of courtiers, all Conti or Marchesi, with an average income of 5,000 lire. She realised this disadvantage after the first few days, and devoted herself exclusively to pleasing the Sovereign and his Consort, the latter of whom was in absolute control of the Crown Prince. The Duchessa knew how to amuse the Sovereign, and profited by the extreme attention he paid to her lightest word to put in some shrewd thrusts at the courtiers who hated her. After the foolish actions that Rassi had made him commit, and for foolishness that sheds blood there is no reparation, the Prince was sometimes afraid and was often bored, which had brought him to a state of morbid envy; he felt that he was deriving little amusement from life, and grew sombre when he saw other people amused; the sight of happiness made him furious. "We must keep our love secret," she told her admirer, and gave the Prince to understand that she

was only very moderately attached to the Conte, who for that matter was so thoroughly deserving of esteem.

This discovery had given His Highness a happy day. From time to time, the Duchessa let fall a few words about the plan she had in her mind of taking a few months' holiday every year, to be spent in seeing Italy, which she did not know at all; she would visit Naples, Florence, Rome. Now nothing in the world was more capable of distressing the Prince than an apparent desertion of this sort: it was one of his most pronounced weaknesses; any action that might be interpreted as showing contempt for his capital city pierced him to the heart. He felt that he had no way of holding Signora Sanseverina, and Signora Sanseverina was by far the most brilliant woman in Parma. A thing without parallel in the lazy Italian character, people used to drive in from the surrounding country to attend her Thursdays; they were regular festivals; almost every week the Duchessa had something new and sensational to present. The Prince was dying to see one of these Thursdays for himself; but how was it to be managed? Go to the house of a private citizen! That was a thing that neither his father nor he had ever done in their lives!

There came a certain Thursday of cold wind and rain; all through the evening the Prince heard carriages rattling over the pavement of the piazza outside the Palace, on their way to Signora Sanseverina's. He moved petulantly in his chair: other people were amusing themselves, and he, their sovereign Prince, their absolute master, who ought to find more amusement than anyone in the world, he was tasting the fruit of boredom! He rang for his aide-decamp: he was obliged to wait until a dozen trustworthy men had been posted in the street that led from the Royal Palace to the palazzo Sanseverina. Finally, after an hour that seemed to the Prince an age, during which he had been minded a score of times to brave the assassins' daggers and to go boldly out without any precaution, he appeared in the first of Signora Sanseverina's drawing-rooms. A thunderbolt might have fallen upon the carpet and not produced so much surprise. In the twinkling of an eye, and as the Prince advanced through them, these gay and noisy rooms were hushed to a stupefied silence; every eye, fixed on the Prince, was strained with attention. The courtiers appeared disconcerted; the Duchessa alone shewed no sign of surprise. When finally her guests had recovered sufficient strength to speak, the great preoccupation of all present was to decide the

important question: had the Duchessa been warned of this visit, or had she like everyone else been taken by surprise?

The Prince was amused, and the reader may now judge of the utterly impulsive character of the Duchessa, and of the boundless power which vague ideas of departure, adroitly disseminated, had enabled her to assume.

As she went to the door with the Prince, who was making her the prettiest speeches, an odd idea came to her which she ventured to put into words quite simply, and as though it were the most natural thing in the world.

“If Your Serene Highness would address to the Princess three or four of these charming utterances which he lavishes on me, he could be far more certain of giving me pleasure than by telling me that I am pretty. I mean that I would not for anything in the world have the Princess look with an unfriendly eye on the signal mark of his favour with which His Highness has honoured me this evening.”

The Prince looked fixedly at her and replied in a dry tone:

“I was under the impression that I was my own master and could go where I pleased.”

The Duchessa blushed.

“I wished only,” she explained, instantly recovering herself, “not to expose His Highness to the risk of a bootless errand, for this Thursday will be the last; I am going for a few days to Bologna or Florence.”

When she reappeared in the rooms, everyone imagined her to be at the height of favour, whereas she had just taken a risk upon which, in the memory of man, no one had ever ventured. She made a sign to the Conte, who rose from the whist-table and followed her into a little room that was lighted but empty.

“You have done a very bold thing,” he informed her; “I should not have advised it myself, but when hearts are really inflamed,” he added with a smile, “happiness enhances love, and if you leave tomorrow morning, I shall follow you tomorrow night. I shall be detained here only by that burden of a

Ministry of Finance which I was stupid enough to take on my shoulders; but in four hours of hard work, one can hand over a good many accounts. Let us go back, dear friend, and play at ministerial fatuity with all freedom and without reserve; it may be the last performance that we shall give in this town. If he thinks he is being defied, the man is capable of anything; he will call it making an example. When these people have gone, we can decide on a way of barricading you for to-night; the best plan perhaps would be to set off without delay for your house at Sacca, by the Po, which has the advantage of being within half an hour of Austrian territory."

For the Duchessa's love and self-esteem this was an exquisite moment; she looked at the Conte, and her eyes brimmed with tears. So powerful a Minister, surrounded by this swarm of courtiers who loaded him with homage equal to that which they paid to the Prince himself, to leave everything for her sake, and with such unconcern!

When she returned to the drawing-room she was beside herself with joy. Everyone bowed down before her.

"How prosperity has changed the Duchessa!" was murmured everywhere by the courtiers, "one would hardly recognise her. So that Roman spirit, so superior to everything in the world, does, after all, deign to appreciate the extraordinary favour that has just been conferred upon her by the Sovereign!"

Towards the end of the evening the Conte came to her: "I must tell you the latest news." Immediately the people who happened to be standing near the Duchessa withdrew.

"The Prince, on his return to the Palace," the Conte went on, "had himself announced at the door of his wife's room. Imagine the surprise! 'I have come to tell you,' he said to her, 'about a really most delightful evening I have spent at the Sanseverina's. It was she who asked me to give you a full description of the way in which she has decorated that grimy old palazzo.' Then the Prince took a seat and went into a description of each of your rooms in turn.

“He spent more than twenty-five minutes with his wife, who was in tears of joy; for all her intelligence, she could not think of anything to keep the conversation going in the light tone which His Highness was pleased to impart to it.”

This Prince was by no means a wicked man, whatever the Liberals of Italy might say of him. As a matter of fact, he had cast a good number of them into prison, but that was from fear, and he used to repeat now and then, as though to console himself for certain unpleasant memories: “It is better to kill the devil than to let the devil kill you.” The day after the party we have been describing, he was supremely happy; he had done two good actions: he had gone to the Thursday, and he had talked to his wife. At dinner, he addressed her again; in a word, this Thursday at Signora Sanseverina’s brought about a domestic revolution with which the whole of Parma rang; the Raversi was in consternation, and the Duchessa doubly delighted: she had contrived to be of use to her lover, and had found him more in love with her than ever.

“All this owing to a thoroughly rash idea which came into my mind!” she said to the Conte. “I should be more free, no doubt, in Rome or Naples, but should I find so fascinating a game to play there? No, indeed, my dear Conte, and you provide me with all my joy in life.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

It is with trifling details of court life as insignificant as those related in the last chapter that we should have to fill up the history of the next four years. Every spring the Marchesa came with her daughters to spend a couple of months at the palazzo Sanseverina or on the property of Sacca, by the bank of the Po; there they spent some very pleasant hours and used to talk of Fabrizio, but the Conte would never allow him to pay a single visit to Parma. The Duchessa and the Minister had indeed to make amends for certain acts of folly, but on the whole Fabrizio followed soberly enough the line of conduct that had been laid down for him: that of a great nobleman who is studying theology and does not rely entirely on his virtues to bring him advancement. At Naples, he had acquired a keen interest in the study of antiquity, he made excavations; this new passion had almost taken the place of his passion for horses. He had sold his English thoroughbreds in order to continue his excavations at Miseno, where he had turned up a bust of Tiberius as a young man which had been classed among the finest relics of antiquity. The discovery of this bust was almost the keenest pleasure that had come to him at Naples. He had too lofty a nature to seek to copy the other young men he saw, to wish for example to play with any degree of seriousness the part of lover. Of course he never lacked mistresses, but these were of no consequence to him, and, in spite of his years, one might say of him that he still knew nothing of love: he was all the more loved on that account. Nothing prevented him from behaving with the most perfect coolness, for to him a young and pretty woman was always equivalent to any other young and pretty woman; only the latest comer seemed to him the most exciting. One of the most generally admired ladies in Naples had done all sorts of foolish things in his honour during the last year of his stay there, which at first had amused him, and had ended by boring him to tears, so much so that one of the joys of his departure was the prospect of being delivered from the attentions of the charming Duchessa d'A —— . It was in 1821 that, having satisfactorily passed all his examinations, his director of studies, or governor, received a Cross and a gratuity, and he himself started out to see at length that city of Parma of which he had often dreamed. He was Monsignore, and he had four horses drawing his carriage; at the stage

before Parma he took only two, and on entering the town made them stop outside the church of San Giovanni. There was to be found the costly tomb of Archbishop Ascanio del Dongo, his great-granduncle, the author of the Latin genealogy. He prayed beside the tomb, then went on foot to the palazzo of the Duchessa, who did not expect him until several days later. There was a large crowd in her drawing-room; presently they were left alone.

“Well, are you satisfied with me?” he asked her as he flung himself into her arms; “thanks to you, I have spent four quite happy years at Naples, instead of eating my head off at Novara with my mistress authorised by the police.”

The Duchessa could not get over her astonishment; she would not have known him had she seen him go by in the street; she discovered him to be, what as a matter of fact he was, one of the best-looking men in Italy; his physiognomy in particular was charming. She had sent him to Naples a devil-may-care young rough-rider; the horsewhip he invariably carried at that time had seemed an inherent part of his person: now he had the noblest and most measured bearing before strangers, while in private conversation she found that he had retained all the ardour of his boyhood. This was a diamond that had lost nothing by being polished. Fabrizio had not been in the room an hour when Conte Mosca appeared; he arrived a little too soon. The young man spoke to him with so apt a choice of terms of the Cross of Parma that had been conferred on his governor, and expressed his lively gratitude for certain other benefits of which he did not venture to speak in so open a fashion, with so perfect a restraint, that at the first glance the Minister formed an excellent impression of him. “This nephew,” he murmured to the Duchessa, “is made to adorn all the exalted posts to which you will raise him in due course.” So far, all had gone wonderfully well, but when the Minister, thoroughly satisfied with Fabrizio, and paying attention so far only to his actions and gestures, turned to the Duchessa, he noticed a curious look in her eyes. “This young man is making a strange impression here,” he said to himself. This reflexion was bitter; the Conte had reached the fifties, a cruel word of which perhaps only a man desperately in love can feel the full force. He was a thoroughly good man, thoroughly deserving to be loved, apart from his severities as a Minister. But in his eyes that cruel word fifties threw a dark cloud over his whole life and might well have made him cruel on his own account. In the five years since he had persuaded the Duchessa to settle

at Parma, she had often aroused his jealousy, especially at first, but never had she given him any real grounds for complaint. He believed indeed, and rightly, that it was with the object of making herself more certain of his heart that the Duchessa had had recourse to those apparent bestowals of her favour upon various young beaux of the court. He was sure, for instance, that she had rejected the offers of the Prince, who, indeed, on that occasion, had made a significant utterance.

“But if I were to accept Your Highness’s offer,” the Duchessa had said to him with a smile, “how should I ever dare to look the Conte in the face afterwards?”

“I should be almost as much out of countenance as you. The dear Conte! My friend! But there is a very easy way out of that difficulty, and I have thought of it: the Conte would be put in the citadel for the rest of his days.”

At the moment of Fabrizio’s arrival, the Duchessa was so beside herself with joy that she never even thought of the ideas which the look in her eyes might put into the Conte’s head. The effect was profound and the suspicions it’aroused irremediable.

Fabrizio was received by the Prince two hours after his arrival; the Duchessa, foreseeing the good effect which this impromptu audience would have on the public, had been begging for it for the last two months; this favour put Fabrizio beyond all rivalry from the first; the pretext for it had been that he would only be passing through Parma on his way to visit his mother in Piedmont. At the moment when a charming little note from the Duchessa arrived to inform the Prince that Fabrizio awaited his orders, the Prince was feeling bored. “I shall see,” he said to himself, “a saintly little simpleton, a mean or a sly face.” The Town Commandant had already reported the newcomer’s first visit to the tomb of his archiépiscopal uncle. The Prince saw enter the room a tall young man whom, but for his violet stockings, he would have taken for some young officer.

This little surprise dispelled his boredom: “Here is a fellow,” he said to himself, “for whom they will be asking me heaven knows what favours, everything that I have to bestow. He is just come, he probably feels nervous: I shall give him a little dose of Jacobin politics; we shall see how he replies.”

After the first gracious words on the Prince's part:

"Well, Monsignore," he said to Fabrizio, "and the people of Naples, are they happy? Is the King loved?"

"Serene Highness," Fabrizio replied without a moment's hesitation, "I used to admire, when they passed me in the street, the excellent bearing of the troops of the various regiments of His Majesty the King; the better classes are respectful towards their masters, as they ought to be; but I must confess that, all my life, I have never allowed the lower orders to speak to me about anything but the work for which I am paying them."

"Plague!" said the Prince, "what a slyboots! This is a well-trained bird, I recognise the Sanseverina touch." Becoming interested, the Prince employed great skill in leading Fabrizio on to discuss this scabrous topic. The young man, animated by the danger he was in, was so fortunate as to hit upon some admirable rejoinders: "It is almost insolence to boast of one's love for one's King," he said; "it is blind obedience that one owes to him." At the sight of so much prudence the Prince almost lost his temper: "Here, it seems, is a man of parts come among us from Naples, and I don't like that breed; a man of parts may follow the highest principles and even be quite sincere; all the same on one side or the other he is always first cousin to Voltaire and Rousseau."

This Prince felt himself almost defied by such correctness of manner and such unassailable rejoinders coming from a youth fresh from college; what he had expected never occurred; in an instant he assumed a tone of good-fellowship and, reverting in a few words to the basic principles of society and government, repeated, adapting them to the matter in hand, certain phrases of Fénelon which he had been made to learn by heart in his boyhood for use in public audiences.

"These principles surprise you, young man," he said to Fabrizio (he had called him Monsignore at the beginning of the audience, and intended to give him his Monsignore again in dismissing him, but in the course of the conversation he felt it to be more adroit, better suited to moving turns of speech, to address him in an informal and friendly style). "These principles surprise you, young man. I admit that they bear little resemblance to the

bread and butter absolutism" (this was the expression in use) "which you can read every day in my official newspaper. . . . But, great heavens, what is the good of my quoting that to you? Those writers in my newspaper must be quite unknown to you."

"I beg Your Serene Highness's pardon; not only do I read the Parma newspaper, which seems to me to be very well written, but I hold, moreover, with it, that everything that has been done since the death of Louis XIV, in 1715, has been at once criminal and foolish. Man's chief interest in life is his own salvation, there can be no two ways of looking at it, and that is a happiness that lasts for eternity. The words Liberty, Justice, the Good of the Greatest Number, are infamous and criminal: they form in people's minds the habits of discussion and want of confidence. A Chamber of Deputies votes no confidence in what these people call the Ministry. This fatal habit of want of confidence once contracted, human weakness applies it to everything, man loses confidence in the Bible, the Orders of the Church, Tradition and everything else; from that moment he is lost. Even upon the assumption — which is abominably false, and criminal even to suggest — that this want of confidence in the authority of the Princes by God established were to secure one's happiness during the twenty or thirty years of life which any of us may expect to enjoy, what is half a century, or a whole century even, compared with an eternity of torment?" And so on.

One could see, from the way in which Fabrizio spoke, that he was seeking to arrange his ideas so that they should be grasped as quickly as possible by his listener; it was clear that he was not simply repeating a lesson.

Presently the Prince lost interest in his contest with this young man whose simple and serious manner had begun to irritate him.

"Good-.bye, Monsignore," he said to him abruptly, "I can see that they provide an excellent education at the Ecclesiastical Academy of Naples, and it is quite simple when these good precepts fall upon so distinguished a mind, one secures brilliant results. Good-bye." And he turned his back on him.

"I have quite failed to please this animal," thought Fabrizio.

“And now, it remains to be seen,” said the Prince as soon as he was once more alone, “whether this fine young man is capable of passion for anything; in that case, he would be complete. . . . Could anyone repeat with more spirit the lessons he has learned from his aunt? I felt I could hear her speaking; should we have a revolution here, it would be she that would edit the Monitore, as the Sanfelice did at Naples! But the Sanfelice, in spite of her twenty-five summers and her beauty, got a bit of a hanging all the same! A warning to women with brains.” In supposing Fabrizio to be his aunt’s pupil, the Prince was mistaken: people with brains who are born on the throne or at the foot of it soon lose all fineness of touch; they proscribe, in their immediate circle, freedom of conversation which seems to them coarseness; they refuse to look at anything but masks and pretend to judge the beauty of complexions; the amusing part of it is that they imagine their touch to be of the finest. In this case, for instance, Fabrizio believed practically everything that we have heard him say; it is true that he did not think twice in a month of these great principles. He had keen appetites, he had brains, but he had faith.

The desire for liberty, the fashion and cult of the greatest good of the greatest number, after which the nineteenth century has run mad, were nothing in his eyes but a heresy which, like other heresies, would pass away, though not until it had destroyed many souls, as the plague while it reigns unchecked in a country destroys many bodies. And in spite of all this Fabrizio read the French newspapers with keen enjoyment, even taking rash steps to procure them.

Fabrizio having returned quite flustered from his audience at the Palace, and having told his aunt of the various attacks launched on him by the Prince:

“You ought,” she told him, “to go at once to see Father Landriani, our excellent Archbishop; go there on foot; climb the staircase quietly, make as little noise as possible in the ante-rooms; if you are kept waiting, so much the better, a thousand times better! In a word, be apostolic!”

“I understand,” said Fabrizio, “our man is a Tartuffe.”

“Not the least bit in the world, he is virtue incarnate.”

“Even after the way he behaved,” said Fabrizio in some bewilderment, “when Conte Palanza was executed?”

“Yes, my friend, after the way he behaved: the father of our Archbishop was a clerk in the Ministry of Finance, a man of humble position, and that explains everything. Monsignor Landriani is a man of keen, extensive and deep intelligence; he is sincere, he loves virtue; I am convinced that if an Emperor Decius were to reappear in the world he would undergo martyrdom like Polyeuctes in the opera they played last week. So much for the good side of the medal, now for the reverse: as soon as he enters the Sovereign’s, or even the Prime Minister’s presence, he is dazzled by the sight of such greatness, he becomes confused, he begins to blush; it is physically impossible for him to say no. This accounts for the things he has done, things which have won him that cruel reputation throughout Italy; but what is not generally known is that, when public opinion had succeeded in enlightening him as to the trial of Conte Palanza, he set himself the penance of living upon bread and water for thirteen weeks, the same number of weeks as there are letters in the name Davide Palanza. We have at this court a rascal of infinite cleverness named Rossi, a Chief Justice or Fiscal General, who at the time of Conte Palanza’s death cast a spell over Father Landriani. During his thirteen weeks’ penance, Conte Mosca, from pity and also a little out of malice, used to ask him to dinner once and even twice a week: the good Archbishop, in deference to his host, ate like everyone else; he would have thought it rebellious and Jacobinical to make a public display of his penance for an action that had the Sovereign’s approval. But we knew that, for each dinner at which his duty as a loyal subject had obliged him to eat like everyone else, he set himself a penance of two days more of bread and water.

“Monsignor Landriani, a man of superior intellect, a scholar of the first order, has only one weakness: he likes to be loved: therefore, grow affectionate as you look at him, and, on your third visit, shew your love for him outright. That, added to your birth, will make him adore you at once. Shew no sign of surprise if he accompanies you to the head of the staircase, assume an air of being accustomed to such manners: he is a man who was born on his knees before the nobility. For the rest, be simple, apostolic, no cleverness, no brilliance, no prompt repartee; if you do not startle him at all, he will be delighted with you; do not forget that it must be on his own

initiative that he makes you his Grand Vicar. The Conte and I will be surprised and even annoyed at so rapid an advancement; that is essential in dealing with the Sovereign."

Fabrizio hastened to the Archbishop's Palace: by a singular piece of good fortune, the worthy prelate's footman, who was slightly deaf, did not catch the name del Dongo; he announced a young priest named Fabrizio; the Archbishop happened to be closeted with a parish priest of by no means exemplary morals, for whom he had sent in order to scold him. He was in the act of delivering a reprimand, a most painful thing for him, and did not wish to be distressed by it longer than was necessary; accordingly he kept waiting for three quarters of an hour the great-nephew of the Archbishop Ascanio del Dongo.

How are we to depict his apologies and despair when, after having conducted the priest to the farthest ante-room, and on asking, as he returned, the man who was waiting what he could do to serve him, he caught sight of the violet stockings and heard the name Fabrizio del Dongo? This accident seemed to our hero so fortunate that on this first visit he ventured to kiss the saintly prelate's hand, in a transport of affection. He was obliged to hear the Archbishop repeat in a tone of despair: "A del Dongo kept waiting in my ante-room!" The old man felt obliged, by way of apology, to relate to him the whole story of the parish priest, his misdeeds, his replies to the charges, and so forth.

"Is it really possible," Fabrizio asked himself as he made his way back to the palazzo Sanseverina, "that this is the man who hurried on the execution of that poor Conte Palanza?"

"What is Your Excellency's impression?" Conte Mosca inquired with a smile, as he saw him enter the Duchessa's drawing-room. (The Conte would not allow Fabrizio to address him as Excellency.)

"I have fallen from the clouds; I know nothing at all about human nature: I would have wagered, had I not known his name, that that man could not bear to see a chicken bleed."

“And you would have won your wager,” replied the Conte; “but when he is with the Prince, or merely with myself, he cannot say no. To be quite honest, in order for me to create my full effect, I have to slip the yellow riband of my Grand Cordon over my coat; in plain evening dress he would contradict me, and so I always put on a uniform to receive him. It is not for us to destroy the prestige of power, the French newspapers are demolishing it quite fast enough; it is doubtful whether the mania of respect will last out our time, and you, my dear nephew, will outlive respect altogether. You will be simply a fellow-man!”

Fabrizio delighted greatly in the Conte’s society; he was the first superior person who had condescended to talk to him frankly, without make-believe; moreover they had a taste in common, that for antiquities and excavations. The Conte, for his part, was flattered by the extreme attention with which the young man listened to him; but there was one paramount objection: Fabrizio occupied a set of rooms in the palazzo Sanseverina, spent his whole time with the Duchessa, let it be seen in all innocence that this intimacy constituted his happiness in life, and Fabrizio had eyes and a complexion of a freshness that drove the older man to despair.

For a long time past Ranuccio–Ernesto IV, who rarely encountered a cruel fair, had felt it to be an affront that the Duchessa’s virtue, which was well known at court, had not made an exception in his favour. As we have seen, the mind and the presence of mind of Fabrizio had shocked him at their first encounter. He took amiss the extreme friendship which Fabrizio and his aunt heedlessly displayed in public; he gave ear with the closest attention to the remarks of his courtiers, which were endless. The arrival of this young man and the unprecedented audience which he had obtained provided the court with news and a sensation for the next month; which gave the Prince an idea.

He had in his guard a private soldier who carried his wine in the most admirable way; this man spent his time in the trattorie, and reported the spirit of the troops directly to his Sovereign. Carlone lacked education, otherwise he would long since have obtained promotion. Well, his duty was to be in the Palace every day when the strokes of twelve sounded on the great clock. The Prince went in person a little before noon to arrange in a certain way the shutters of a mezzanino communicating with the room in which His Highness dressed. He returned to this mezzanino shortly after twelve had

struck, and there found the soldier; the Prince had in his pocket writing materials and a sheet of paper; he dictated to the soldier the following letter:

“Your Excellency has great intelligence, doubtless, and it is thanks to his profound sagacity that we see this State so well governed. But, my dear Conte, such great success never comes unaccompanied by a little envy, and I am seriously afraid that people will be laughing a little at your expense if your sagacity does not discern that a certain handsome young man has had the good fortune to inspire, unintentionally it may be, a passion of the most singular order. This happy mortal is, they say, only twenty-three years old, and, dear Conte, what complicates the question is that you and I are considerably more than twice that age. In the evening, at a certain distance, the Conte is charming, scintillating, a wit, as attractive as possible; but in the morning, in an intimate scene, all things considered, the newcomer has perhaps greater attractions. Well, we poor women, we make a great point of this youthful freshness, especially when we have ourselves passed thirty. Is there not some talk already of settling this charming youth at our court, in some fine post? And if so, who is the person who speaks of it most frequently to Your Excellency?”

The Prince took the letter and gave the soldier two scudi.

“This is in addition to your pay,” he said in a grim tone. “Not a single word of this to anyone, or you will find yourself in the dampest dungeon in the citadel.” The Prince had in his desk a collection of envelopes bearing the addresses of most of the persons at his court, in the handwriting of this same soldier who was understood to be illiterate, and never even wrote out his own police reports: the Prince picked out the one he required.

A few hours later, Conte Mosca received a letter by post; the hour of its delivery had been calculated, and just as the postman, who had been seen going in with a small envelope in his hand, came out of the ministerial palace, Mosca was summoned to His Highness. Never had the favourite appeared to be in the grip of a blacker melancholy: to enjoy this at his leisure, the Prince called out to him, as he saw him come in:

“I want to amuse myself by talking casually to my friend and not working with my Minister. I have a maddening headache this evening, and all sorts of

gloomy thoughts keep coming into my mind."

I need hardly mention the abominable ill-humour which agitated the Prime Minister, Conte Mosca della Rovere, when at length he was permitted to take leave of his august master. Ranuccio–Ernesto IV was a past-master in the art of torturing a heart, and it would not be unfair at this point to make the comparison of the tiger which loves to play with its victim.

The Conte made his coachman drive him home at a gallop; he called out as he crossed the threshold that not a living soul was to be allowed upstairs, sent word to the auditor on duty that he might take himself off (the knowledge that there was a human being within earshot was hateful to him), and hastened to shut himself up in the great picture gallery. There at length he could give full vent to his fury; there he spent an hour without lights, wandering about the room like a man out of his mind. He sought to impose silence on his heart, to concentrate all the force of his attention upon deliberating what action he ought to take. Plunged in an anguish that would have moved to pity his most implacable enemy, he said to himself: "The man I abhor is living in the Duchessa's house; he spends every hour of the day with her. Ought I to try to make one of her women speak? Nothing could be more dangerous; she is so good to them; she pays them well; she is adored by them (and by whom, great God, is she not adored?)! The question is," he continued, raging: "Ought I to let her detect the jealousy that is devouring me, or not to speak of it?

"If I remain silent, she will make no attempt to keep anything from me. I know Gina, she is a woman who acts always on the first impulse; her conduct is incalculable, even by herself; if she tries to plan out a course in advance, she goes all wrong; invariably, when it is time for action, a new idea comes into her head which she follows rapturously as though it were the most wonderful thing in the world, and upsets everything.

"If I make no mention of my suffering, nothing will be kept back from me, and I shall see all that goes on. . . . "Yes, but by speaking I bring about a change of circumstances: I make her reflect; I give her fair warning of all the horrible things that may happen. . . . Perhaps she will send him away" (the Conte breathed a sigh of relief), "then I shall practically have won; even allowing her to be a little out of temper for the moment, I shall soothe her

. . . and a little ill-temper, what could be more natural? . . . she has loved him like a son for fifteen years. There lies all my hope: like a son . . . but she had ceased to see him after his dash to Waterloo; now, on his return from Naples, especially for her, he is a different man. A different man!" he repeated with fury, "and that man is charming; he has, apart from everything else, that simple and tender air and that smiling eye which hold out such a promise of happiness! And those eyes — the Duchessa cannot be accustomed to see eyes like those at this court! . . . Our substitute for them is a gloomy or sardonic stare. I myself, pursued everywhere by official business, governing only by my influence over a man who would like to turn me to ridicule, what a look there must often be in mine! Ah! whatever pains I may take to conceal it, it is in my eyes that age will always shew. My gaiety, does it not always border upon irony? . . . I will go farther, I must be sincere with myself; does not my gaiety allow a glimpse to be caught, as of something quite close to it, of absolute power . . . and irresponsibility? Do I not sometimes say to myself, especially when people irritate me: 'I can do what I like!' and indeed go on to say what is foolish: 'I ought to be happier than other men, since I possess what others have not, sovereign power in three things out of four . . .?' Very well, let us be just! The habit of thinking thus must affect my smile, must give me a selfish, satisfied air. And, how charming his smile is! It breathes the easy happiness of extreme youth, and engenders it."

Unfortunately for the Conte, the weather that evening was hot, stifling, with the threat of a storm in the air; the sort of weather, in short, that in those parts carries people to extremes. How am I to find space for all the arguments, all the ways of looking at what was happening to him, which for three mortal hours on end, kept this impassioned mar in torment? At length the side of prudence prevailed, solely as a result of this reflexion: "I am in all probability mad; when I think I am reasoning, I am not, I am simply turning about in search of a less painful position, I pass by without seeing it some decisive argument. Since I am blinded by excessive grief, let us obey the rule, approved by every sensible man, which is called Prudence.

"Besides, once I have uttered the fatal word jealousy, my course is traced for me for ever. If on the contrary I say nothing today, I can speak tomorrow, I remain master of the situation." The crisis was too acute; the Conte would have gone mad had it continued. He was comforted for a few moments, his attention came to rest on the anonymous letter. From whose hand could it

have come? There followed then a search for possible names, and a personal judgement of each, which created a diversion. In the end, the Conte remembered a gleam of malice that had darted from the eyes of the Sovereign, when it had occurred to him to say, towards the end of the audience: “Yes, dear friend, let us be agreed on this point: the pleasures and cares of the most amply rewarded ambition, even of unbounded power, are as nothing compared with the intimate happiness that is afforded by relations of affection and love. I am a man first, and a Prince afterwards, and, when I have the good fortune to be in love, my mistress speaks to the man and not to the Prince.” The Conte compared that moment of malicious joy with the phrase in the letter: “It is thanks to your profound sagacity that we see this State so well governed.” “Those are the Prince’s words!” he exclaimed; “in a courtier they would be a gratuitous piece of imprudence; the letter comes from His Highness.”

This problem solved, the fault joy caused by the pleasure of guessing the solution was soon effaced by the cruel spectre of the charming graces of Fabrizio, which returned afresh. It was like an enormous weight that fell back on the heart of the unhappy man. “What does it matter from whom the anonymous letter comes?” he cried with fury; “does the fact that it discloses to me exist any the less? This caprice may alter my whole life,” he said, as though to excuse himself for being so mad. “At the first moment, if she cares for him in a certain way, she will set off with him for Belgirate, for Switzerland, for the ends of the earth. She is rich, and besides, even if she had to live on a few louis a year, what would that matter to her? Did she not admit to me, not a week ago, that her palazzo, so well arranged, so magnificent, bored her? Novelty is essential to so youthful a spirit! And with what simplicity does this new form of happiness offer itself! She will be carried away before she has begun to think of the danger, before she has begun to think of being sorry for me! And yet I am so wretched!” cried the Conte, bursting into tears.

He had sworn to himself that he would not go to the Duchessa’s that evening; never had his eyes thirsted so to gaze on her. At midnight he presented himself at her door; he found her alone with her nephew; at ten o’clock she had sent all her guests away and had closed her door.

At the sight of the tender intimacy that prevailed between these two creatures, and of the Duchessa's artless joy, a frightful difficulty arose before the eyes of the Conte, and one that was quite unforeseen. He had never thought of it during his long deliberation in the picture gallery: how was he to conceal his jealousy?

Not knowing what pretext to adopt, he pretended that he had found the Prince that evening excessively ill-disposed towards him, contradicting all his assertions, and so forth. He had the distress of seeing the Duchessa barely listen to him, and pay no attention to these details which, forty-eight hours earlier, would have plunged her in an endless stream of discussion. The Conte looked at Fabrizio: never had that handsome Lombard face appeared to him so simple and so noble! Fabrizio paid more attention than the Duchessa to the difficulties which he was relating.

"Really," he said to himself, "that head combines extreme good-nature with the expression of a certain artless and tender joy which is irresistible. It seems to be saying: 'Love and the happiness it brings are the only serious things in this world.' And yet, when one comes to some detail which requires thought, the light wakes in his eyes and surprises one, and one is left dumbfoundered.

"Everything is simple in his eyes, because everything is seen from above. Great God! how is one to fight against an enemy like this? And after all, what is life without Gina's love? With what rapture she seems to be listening to the charming sallies of that mind, which is so boyish and must, to a woman, seem without a counterpart in the world!"

An atrocious thought gripped the Conte like a sudden cramp. "Shall I stab him here, before her face, and then kill myself?"

He took a turn through the room, his legs barely supporting him, but his hand convulsively gripping the hilt of his dagger. Neither of the others paid any attention to what he might be doing. He announced that he was going to give an order to his servant; they did not even hear him; the Duchessa was laughing tenderly at something Fabrizio had just said to her. The Conte went up to a lamp in the outer room, and looked to see whether the point of his dagger was well sharpened. "One must behave graciously, and with perfect

manners to this young man," he said to himself as he returned to the other room and went up to them.

He became quite mad; it seemed to him that, as they leaned their heads together, they were kissing each other, there, before his eyes. "That is impossible in my presence," he told himself; "my wits have gone astray. I must calm myself; if I behave rudely, the Duchessa is quite capable, simply out of injured vanity, of following him to Belgirate; and there, or on the way there, a chance word may be spoken which will give a name to what they now feel for one another; and after that, in a moment, all the consequences.

"Solitude will render that word decisive, and besides, once the Duchessa has left my side, what is to become of me? And if, after overcoming endless difficulties on the Prince's part, I go and shew my old and anxious face at Belgirate, what part shall I play before these people both mad with happiness?

"Here even, what else am I than the terzo incomodo?" (That beautiful Italian language is simply made for love: terzo incomodo, a third person when two are company.) What misery for a man of spirit to feel that he is playing that execrable part, and not to be able to muster the strength to get up and leave the room!

The Conte was on the point of breaking out, or at least of betraying his anguish by the discomposure of his features. When in one of his circuits of the room he found himself near the door, he took his flight, calling out, in a genial, intimate tone: "Good-bye, you two! — Once must avoid bloodshed," he said to himself.

The day following this horrible evening, after a night spent half in compiling a detailed sum of Fabrizio's advantages, half in the frightful transports of the most cruel jealousy, it occurred to the Conte that he might send for a young servant of his own; this man was keeping company with a girl named Cecchina, one of the Duchessa's personal maids, and her favourite. As good luck would have it, this young man was very sober in his habits, indeed miserly, and was anxious to find a place as porter in one of the public institutions of Parma. The Conte ordered the man to fetch Cecchina, his mistress, instantly. The man obeyed, and an hour later the Conte appeared

suddenly in the room where the girl was waiting with her lover. The Conte frightened them both by the amount of gold that he gave them, then he addressed these few words to the trembling Cecchina, looking her straight in the face:

“Is the Duchessa in love with Monsignore?”

“No,” said the girl, gaining courage to speak after a moment’s silence. . . . “No, not yet, but he often kisses the Signora’s hands, laughing, it is true, but with real feeling.”

This evidence was completed by a hundred answers to as many furious questions from the Conte; his uneasy passion made the poor couple earn in full measure the money that he had flung them: he ended by believing what they told him, and was less unhappy. “If the Duchessa ever has the slightest suspicion of what we have been saying,” he told Cecchina, “I shall send your lover to spend twenty years in the fortress, and when you see him again his hair will be quite white.”

Some days elapsed, during which Fabrizio in turn lost all his gaiety.

“I assure you,” he said to the Duchessa, “that Conte Mosca feels an antipathy for me.”

“So much the worse for His Excellency,” she replied with a trace of temper.

This was by no means the true cause of the uneasiness which had made Fabrizio’s gaiety vanish. “The position in which chance has placed me is not tenable,” he told himself. “I am quite sure that she will never say anything, she would be as much horrified by a too significant word as by an incestuous act. But if, one evening, after a rash and foolish day, she should come to examine her conscience, if she believes that I may have guessed the feeling that she seems to have formed for me, what part should I then play in her eyes? Nothing more nor less than the casto Giuseppe!” (An Italian expression alluding to the ridiculous part played by Joseph with the wife of the eunuch Potiphar.)

“Should I give her to understand by a fine burst of confidence that I am not capable of serious affection? I have not the necessary strength of mind to

announce such a fact so that it shall not be as like as two peas to a gross impertinence. The sole resource left to me is a great passion left behind at Naples; in that case, I should return there for twenty-four hours: such a course is wise, but is it really worth the trouble? There remains a minor affair with some one of humble rank at Parma, which might annoy her; but anything is preferable to the appalling position of a man who will not see the truth. This course may, it is true, prejudice my future; I should have, by the exercise of prudence and the purchase of discretion, to minimise the danger." What was so cruel an element among all these thoughts was that really Fabrizio loved the Duchessa far above anyone else in the world. "I must be very clumsy," he told himself angrily, "to have such misgivings as to my ability to persuade her of what is so glaringly true!" Lacking the skill to extricate himself from this position, he grew sombre and sad. "What would become of me, Great God, if I quarrelled with the one person in the world for whom I feel a passionate attachment?" From another point of view, Fabrizio could not bring himself to spoil so delicious a happiness by an indiscreet word. His position abounded so in charm! The intimate friendship of so beautiful and attractive a woman was so pleasant! Under the most commonplace relations of life, her protection gave him so agreeable a position at this court, the great intrigues of which, thanks to her who explained them to him, were as amusing as a play! "But at any moment I may be awakened by a thunderbolt," he said to himself. "These gay, these tender evenings, passed almost in privacy with so thrilling a woman, if they lead to something better, she will expect to find in me a lover; she will call on me for frenzied raptures, for acts of folly, and I shall never have anything more to offer her than friendship, of the warmest kind, but without love; nature has not endowed me with that sort of sublime folly. What reproaches have I not had to bear on that account! I can still hear the Duchessa d'A —— speaking, and I used to laugh at the Duchessa! She will think that I am wanting in love for her, whereas it is love that is wanting in me; never will she make herself understand me. Often after some story about the court, told by her with that grace, that abandonment which she alone in the world possesses, and which is a necessary part of my education besides, I kiss her hand and sometimes her cheek. What is to happen if that hand presses mine in a certain fashion?"

Fabrizio put in an appearance every day in the most respectable and least amusing drawing-rooms in Parma. Guided by the able advice of the

Duchessa, he paid a sagacious court to the two Princes, father and son, to the Princess Clara–Paolina and Monsignore the Archbishop. He met with successes, but these did not in the least console him for his mortal fear of falling out with the Duchessa.

CHAPTER EIGHT

So, less than a month after his arrival at court, Fabrizio had tasted all the sorrows of a courtier, and the intimate friendship which constituted the happiness of his life was poisoned. One evening, tormented by these thoughts, he left that drawing-room of the Duchessa in which he had too much of the air of a reigning lover; wandering at random through the town, he came opposite the theatre, in which he saw lights; he went in. It was a gratuitous imprudence in a man of his cloth and one that he had indeed vowed that he would avoid in Parma, which, after all, is only a small town of forty thousand inhabitants. It is true that after the first few days he had got rid of his official costume; in the evenings, when he was not going into the very highest society, he used simply to dress in black like a layman in mourning.

At the theatre he took a box on the third tier, so as not to be noticed; the play was Goldoni's La Locanderia. He examined the architecture of the building, scarcely did he turn his eyes to the stage. But the crowded audience kept bursting into laughter at every moment; Fabrizio gave a glance at the young actress who was playing the part of the landlady, and found her amusing. He looked at her more closely; she seemed to him quite attractive, and, above all, perfectly natural; she was a simple-minded young girl who was the first to laugh at the witty lines Goldoni had put into her mouth, lines which she appeared to be quite surprised to be uttering. He asked what her name was, and was told: "Marietta Valserra."

"Ah!" he thought; "she has taken my name; that is odd." In spite of his intentions he did not leave the theatre until the end of the piece. The following evening he returned; three days later he knew Marietta Valserra's address.

On the evening of the day on which, with a certain amount of trouble, he had procured this address, he noticed that the Conte was looking at him in the most friendly way. The poor jealous lover, who had all the trouble in the world in keeping within the bounds of prudence, had set spies on the young

man's track, and this theatrical escapade pleased him. How are we to depict the Conte's joy when, on the day following that on which he had managed to bring himself to look amicably at Fabrizio, he learned that the latter, in the partial disguise, it must be admitted, of a long blue frock-coat, had climbed to the wretched apartment which Marietta Valserra occupied on the fourth floor of an old house behind the theatre? His joy was doubled when he heard that Fabrizio had presented himself under a false name, and had had the honour to arouse the jealousy of a scapegrace named Giletti, who in town played Third Servant, and in the villages danced on the tight rope. This noble lover of Marietta cursed Fabrizio most volubly and expressed a desire to kill him.

Opera companies are formed by an impresario who engages in different places the artists whom he can afford to pay or has found unemployed, and the company collected at random remains together for one season or two at most. It is not so with comedy companies; while passing from town to town and changing their address every two or three months, they nevertheless form a family of which all the members love or loathe one another. There are in these companies united couples whom the beaux of the towns in which the actors appear find it sometimes exceedingly difficult to sunder. This is precisely what happened to our hero. Little Marietta liked him well enough, but was horribly afraid of Giletti, who claimed to be her sole lord and master and kept a close watch over her. He protested everywhere that he would kill the Monsignore, for he had followed Fabrizio, and had succeeded in discovering his name. This Giletti was quite the ugliest creature imaginable and the least fitted to be a lover: tall out of all proportion, he was horribly thin, strongly pitted by smallpox, and inclined to squint. In addition, being endowed with all the graces of his profession, he was continually coming into the wings where his fellow-actors were assembled, turning cart-wheels on his feet and hands or practising some other pretty trick. He triumphed in those parts in which the actor has to appear with his face whitened with flour and to give or receive a countless number of blows with a cudgel. This worthy rival of Fabrizio drew a monthly salary of 32 francs, and thought himself extremely well off.

Conte Mosca felt himself drawn up from the gate of the tomb when his watchers gave him the full authority for all these details. His kindly nature reappeared; he seemed more gay and better company than ever in the

Duchessa's drawing-room, and took good care to say nothing to her of the little adventure which had restored him to life. He even took steps to ensure that she should be informed of everything that occurred with the greatest possibly delay. Finally he had the courage to listen to the voice of reason, which had been crying to him in vain for the last month that, whenever a lover's lustre begins to fade, it is time for that lover to travel.

Urgent business summoned him to Bologna, and twice a day cabinet messengers brought him not so much the official papers of his departments as the latest news of the love affairs of little Marietta, the rage of the terrible Giletti and the enterprises of Fabrizio.

One of the Conte's agents asked several times for Arlecchino fantasma e pasticcio, one of Giletti's triumphs (he emerges from the pie at the moment when his rival Brighella is sticking the knife into it, and gives him a drubbing); this was an excuse for making him earn 100 francs. Giletti, who was riddled with debts, took care not to speak of this windfall, but became astonishing in his arrogance.

Fabrizio's whim changed to a wounded pride (at his age, his anxieties had already reduced him to the state of having whims!). Vanity led him to the theatre; the little girl acted in the most sprightly fashion and amused him; on leaving the theatre, he was in love for an hour. The Conte returned to Parma on receiving the news that Fabrizio was in real danger; Giletti, who had served as a trooper in that fine regiment the Dragoni Napoleone, spoke seriously of killing him, and was making arrangements for a subsequent flight to Romagna. If the reader is very young, he will be scandalised by our admiration for this fine mark of virtue. It was, however, no slight act of heroism on the part of Conte Mosca, his return from Bologna; for, after all, frequently in the morning he presented a worn appearance, and Fabrizio was always so fresh, so serene! Who would ever have dreamed of reproaching him with the death of Fabrizio, occurring in his absence and from so stupid a cause? But his was one of those rare spirits which make an everlasting remorse out of a generous action which they might have done and did not do; besides, he could not bear the thought of seeing the Duchessa look sad, and by any fault of his.

He found her, on his arrival, taciturn and gloomy. This is what had occurred: the little lady's maid, Cecchina, tormented by remorse and estimating the importance of her crime by the immensity of the sum that she had received for committing it, had fallen ill. One evening the Duchessa, who was devoted to her, went up to her room. The girl could not hold out against this mark of kindness; she dissolved in tears, was for handing over to her mistress all that she still possessed of the money she had received, and finally had the courage to confess to her the questions asked by the Conte and her own replies to them. The Duchessa ran to the lamp, which she blew out, then said to little Cecchina that she forgave her, but on condition that she never uttered a word about this strange episode to anyone in the world. "The poor Conte," she added in a careless tone, "is afraid of being laughed at; all men are like that."

The Duchessa hastened downstairs to her own apartments. No sooner had she shut the door of her bedroom than she burst into tears; there seemed to her something horrible in the idea of her making love to Fabrizio, whom she had seen brought into the world; and yet what else could her behaviour imply?

This had been the primary cause of the black melancholy in which the Conte found her plunged; on his arrival she suffered fits of impatience with him, and almost with Fabrizio; she would have liked never to set eyes on either of them again; she was contemptuous of the part, ridiculous in her eyes, which Fabrizio was playing with the little Marietta; for the Conte had told her everything, like a true lover, incapable of keeping a secret. She could not grow used to this disaster; her idol had a fault; finally, in a moment of frank friendship, she asked the Conte's advice; this was for him a delicious instant, and a fine reward for the honourable impulse which had made him return to Parma.

"What could be more simple?" said the Conte, smiling. "Young men want to have every woman they see, and next day they do not give her a thought. Ought he not to be going to Belgirate, to see the Marchesa del Dongo? Very well, let him go. During his absence, I shall request the company of comedians to take their talents elsewhere, I shall pay their travelling expenses; but presently we shall see him in love with the first pretty woman that may happen to come his way: it is in the nature of things, and I should

not care to see him act otherwise. . . . If necessary, get the Marchesa to write to him."

This suggestion, offered with the air of a complete indifference, came as a ray of light to the Duchessa; she was frightened of Giletti. That evening, the Conte announced, as though by chance, that one of his couriers, on his way to Vienna, would be passing through Milan; three days later Fabrizio received a letter from his mother. He seemed greatly annoyed at not having yet been able, thanks to Giletti's jealousy, to profit by the excellent intentions, assurance of which little Marietta had conveyed to him through a mammaccia, an old woman who acted as her mother.

Fabrizio found his mother and one of his sisters at Beigirate, a large village in Piedmont, on the right shore of Lake Maggiore; the left shore belongs to the Milanese, and consequently to Austria. This lake, parallel to the Lake of Como, and also running from north to south, is situated some ten leagues farther to the west. The mountain air, the majestic and tranquil aspect of this superb lake which recalled to him that other on the shores of which he had spent his childhood, all helped to transform into a tender melancholy Fabrizio's grief, which was akin to anger. It was with an infinite tenderness that the memory of the Duchessa now presented itself to him; he felt that in separation he was acquiring for her that love which he had never felt for any woman; nothing would have been more painful to him than to be separated from her for ever, and, he being in this frame of mind, if the Duchessa had deigned to have recourse to the slightest coquetry, she could have conquered this heart by — for instance — presenting it with a rival. But, far from taking any so decisive a step, it was not without the keenest self-reproach that she found her thoughts constantly following in the young traveller's footsteps. She reproached herself for what she still called a fancy, as though it had been something horrible; she redoubled her forethought for and attention to the Conte, who, captivated by such a display of charm, paid no heed to the sane voice of reason which was prescribing a second visit to Bologna.

The Marchesa del Dongo, busy with preparations for the wedding of her elder daughter, whom she was marrying to a Milanese Duca, could give only three days to her beloved son; never had she found in him so tender an affection. Through the cloud of melancholy that was more and more closely

enwrapping Fabrizio's heart, an odd and indeed ridiculous idea had presented itself, and he had suddenly decided to adopt it. Dare we say that he wished to consult Priore Blanès? That excellent old man was totally incapable of understanding the sorrows of a heart torn asunder by boyish passions more or less equal in strength; besides, it would have taken a week to make him gather even a faint impression of all the conflicting interests that Fabrizio had to consider at Parma; but in the thought of consulting him Fabrizio recaptured the freshness of his sensations at the age of sixteen. Will it be believed? It was not simply as to a man full of wisdom, to an old and devoted friend, that Fabrizio wished to speak to him; the object of this expedition, and the feelings that agitated our hero during the fifty hours that it lasted are so absurd that, doubtless, in the interests of our narrative, it would have been better to suppress them. I am afraid that Fabrizio's credulity may make him forfeit the sympathy of the reader; but after all thus it was; why flatter him more than another? I have not flattered Conte Mosca, nor the Prince.

Fabrizo, then, since the whole truth must be told, Fabrizio escorted his mother as far as the port of Laveno, on the left shore of Lake Maggiore, the Austrian shore, where she landed about eight o'clock in the evening. (The lake is regarded as neutral territory, and no passport is required of those who do not set foot on shore.) But scarcely had night fallen when he had himself ferried to this same Austrian shore, and landed in a little wood which juts out into the water. He had hired a sediola, a sort of rustic and fast-moving tilbury, by means of which he was able, at a distance of five hundred yards, to keep up with his mother's carriage; he was disguised as a servant of the casa del Dongo, and none of the many police or customs officials ever thought of asking him for his passport. A quarter of a league before Como, where the Marchesa and her daughter were to stop for the night, he took a path to the left which, making a circuit of the village of Vico, afterwards joined a little road recently made along the extreme edge of the lake. It was midnight, and Fabrizio could count upon not meeting any of the police. The trees of the various thickets into which the little road kept continually diving traced the black outline of their foliage against a sky bright with stars but veiled by a slight mist. Water and sky were of a profound tranquillity. Fabrizio's soul could not resist this sublime beauty; he stopped, then sat down on a rock which ran out into the lake, forming almost a little promontory. The universal silence was disturbed only, at regular intervals, by

the faint ripple of the lake as it lapped on the shore. Fabrizio had an Italian heart; I crave the reader's pardon for him: this defect, which will render him less attractive, consisted mainly in this: he had no vanity, save by fits and starts, and the mere sight of sublime beauty melted him to a tender mood and took from his sorrows their hard and bitter edge. Seated on his isolated rock, having no longer any need to be on his guard against the police, protected by the profound night and the vast silence, gentle tears moistened his eyes, and he found there, with little or no effort, the happiest moments that he had tasted for many a day.

He resolved never to tell the Duchessa any falsehood, and it was because he loved her to adoration at that moment that he vowed to himself never to say to her that he loved her; never would he utter in her hearing the word love, since the passion which bears that name was a stranger to his heart. In the enthusiasm of generosity and virtue which formed his happiness at that moment, he made the resolution to tell her, at the first opportunity, everything: his heart had never known love. Once this courageous plan had been definitely adopted, he felt himself delivered of an enormous burden. "She will perhaps have something to say to me about Marietta; very well, I shall never see my little Marietta again," he assured himself blithely.

The overpowering heat which had prevailed throughout the day was beginning to be tempered by the morning breeze. Already dawn was outlining in a faint white glimmer the Alpine peaks that rise to the north and east of Lake Como. Their massive shapes, bleached by their covering of snow, even in the month of June, stand out against the pellucid azure of a sky which at those immense altitudes is always pure. A spur of the Alps stretching southwards into smiling Italy separates the sloping shores of Lake Como from those of the Lake of Garda. Fabrizio followed with his eye all the branches of these sublime mountains, the dawn as it grew brighter came to mark the valleys that divide them, gilding the faint mist which rose from the gorges beneath.

Some minutes since, Fabrizio had taken the road again; he passed the hill that forms the peninsula of Burini, and at length there met his gaze that campanile of the village of Grianta in which he had so often made observations of the stars with Priore Blanès. "What bounds were there to my ignorance in those days? I could not understand," he reminded himself,

“even the ridiculous Latin of those treatises on astrology which my master used to pore over, and I think I respected them chiefly because, understanding only a few words here and there, my imagination stepped in to give them a meaning, and the most romantic sense imaginable.”

Gradually his thoughts entered another channel. “May not there be something genuine in this science? Why should it be different from the rest? A certain number of imbeciles and quick-witted persons agree among themselves that they know (shall we say) Mexican; they impose themselves with this qualification upon society which respects them and governments which pay them. Favours are showered upon them precisely because they have no real intelligence, and authority need not fear their raising the populace and creating an atmosphere of rant by the aid of generous sentiments! For instance, Father Bari, to whom Ernesto IV has just awarded a pension of 4,000 francs and the Cross of his Order for having restored nineteen lines of a Greek dithyramb!

“But, Great God, have I indeed the right to find such things ridiculous? Is it for me to complain?” he asked himself, suddenly, stopping short in the road, “has not that same Cross just been given to my governor at Naples?” Fabrizio was conscious of a feeling of intense disgust; the fine enthusiasm for virtue which had just been making his heart beat high changed into the vile pleasure of having a good share in the spoils of a robbery. “After all,” he said to himself at length, with the lustreless eyes of a man who is dissatisfied with himself, “since my birth gives me the right to profit by these abuses, it would be a signal piece of folly on my part not to take my share, but I must never let myself denounce them in public.” This reasoning was by no means unsound; but Fabrizio had fallen a long way from that elevation of sublime happiness to which he had found himself transported an hour earlier. The thought of privilege had withered that plant, always so delicate, which we name happiness.

“If we are not to believe in astrology,” he went on, seeking to calm himself; “if this science is, like three quarters of the sciences that are not mathematical, a collection of enthusiastic simpletons and adroit hypocrites paid by the masters they serve, how does it come about that I think so often and with emotion of this fatal circumstance: I did make my escape from the

prison at B —— , but in the uniform and with the marching orders of a soldier who had been flung into prison with good cause?”

Fabrizio’s reasoning could never succeed in penetrating farther; he went a hundred ways round the difficulty without managing to surmount it. He was too young still; in his moments of leisure, his mind devoted itself with rapture to enjoying the sensations produced by the romantic circumstances with which his imagination was always ready to supply him. He was far from employing his time in studying with patience the actual details of things in order to discover their causes. Reality still seemed to him flat and muddy; I can understand a person’s not caring to look at it, but then he ought not to argue about it. Above all, he ought not to fashion objections out of the scattered fragments of his ignorance.

Thus it was that, though not lacking in brains, Fabrizio could not manage to see that his half-belief in omens was for him a religion, a profound impression received at his entering upon life. To think of this belief was to feel, it was a happiness. And he set himself resolutely to discover how this could be a proved, a real science, in the same category as geometry, for example. He searched his memory strenuously for all the instances in which omens observed by him had not been followed by the auspicious or inauspicious events which they seemed to herald. But all this time, while he believed himself to be following a line of reasoning and marching towards the truth, his attention kept coming joyfully to rest on the memory of the occasions on which the foreboding had been amply followed by the happy or unhappy accident which it had seemed to him to predict, and his heart was filled with respect and melted; and he would have felt an invincible repugnance for the person who denied the value of omens, especially if in doing so he had had recourse to irony.

Fabrizio walked on without noticing the distance he was covering, and had reached this point in his vain reasonings when, raising his head, he saw the wall of his father’s garden. This wall, which supported a fine terrace, rose to a height of more than forty feet above the road, on its right. A cornice of wrought stone along the highest part, next to the balustrade, gave it a monumental air. “It is not bad,” Fabrizio said to himself dispassionately, “it is good architecture, a little in the Roman style”; he applied to it his recently acquired knowledge of antiquities. Then he turned his head away in disgust;

his father's severities, and especially the denunciation of himself by his brother Ascanio on his return from his wanderings in France, came back to his mind.

"That unnatural denunciation was the origin of my present existence; I may detest, I may despise it; when all is said and done, it has altered my destiny. What would have become of me once I had been packed off to Novara, and my presence barely tolerated in the house of my father's agent, if my aunt had not made love to a powerful Minister? If the said aunt had happened to possess merely a dry, conventional heart instead of that tender and passionate heart which loves me with a sort of enthusiasm that astonishes me? Where should I be now if the Duchessa had had the heart of her brother the Marchese del Dongo?"

Oppressed by these cruel memories, Fabrizio began now to walk with an uncertain step; he came to the edge of the moat immediately opposite the magnificent façade of the castle. Scarcely did he cast a glance at that great building, blackened by tune. The noble language of architecture left him unmoved, the memory of his brother and father stopped his heart to every sensation of beauty, he was attentive only to the necessity of keeping on his guard in the presence of hypocritical and dangerous enemies. He looked for an instant, but with a marked disgust, at the little window of the bedroom which he had occupied until 1815 on the third storey. His father's character had robbed of all charm the memory of his early childhood. "I have not set foot in it," he thought, "since the 7th of March, at eight o'clock in the evening. I left it to go and get the passport from Vasi, and next morning my fear of spies made me hasten my departure. When I passed through again after my visit to France, I had not time to go upstairs, even to look at my prints again, and that thanks to my brother's denouncing me."

Fabrizio turned away his head in horror. "Priore Blanès is eighty-three at the very least," he said sorrowfully to himself; "he hardly ever comes to the castle now, from what my sister tells me; the infirmities of old age have had their effect on him. That heart, once so strong and noble, is frozen by age. Heaven knows how long it is since he last went up to his campanile! I shall hide myself in the cellar, under the vats or under the wine-press, until he is awake; I shall not go in and disturb the good old man in his sleep; probably he will have forgotten my face, even; six years mean a great deal at his age!

I shall find only the tomb of a friend! And it is really childish of me," he added, "to have come here to provoke the disgust that the sight of my father's castle gives me."

Fabrizio now came to the little piazza in front of the church; it was with an astonishment bordering on delirium that he saw, on the second stage of the ancient campanile, the long and narrow window lighted by the little lantern of Priore Blanès. The Priore was in the habit of leaving it there when he climbed to the cage of planks which formed his observatory, so that the light should not prevent him from reading the face of his plain sphere. This chart of the heavens was stretched over a great jar of terracotta which had originally belonged to one of the orange-trees at the castle. In the opening, at the bottom of the jar, burned the tiniest of lamps, the smoke of which was carried away from the jar through a little tin pipe, and the shadow of the pipe indicated the north on the chart. All these memories of things so simple in themselves deluged Fabrizio's heart with emotions and filled him with happiness.

Almost without thinking, he put his hands to his lips and gave the little, short, low whistle which had formerly been the signal for his admission. At once he heard several tugs given to the cord which, from the observatory above, opened the latch of the campanile door. He dashed headlong up the staircase, moved to a transport of excitement; he found the Priore in his wooden armchair in his accustomed place; his eye was fixed on the little glass of a mural quadrant. With his left hand the Priore made a sign to Fabrizio not to interrupt him in his observation; a moment later, he wrote down a figure upon a playing card, then, turning round in his chair, opened his arms to our hero, who flung himself into them, dissolved in tears. Priore Blanès was his true father.

"I expected you," said Blanès, after the first warm words of affection. Was the Priore speaking in his character as a diviner, or, indeed, as he often thought of Fabrizio, had some astrological sign, by pure chance, announced to him the young man's return?

"This means that my death is at hand," said Priore Blanès.

"What!" cried Fabrizio, quite overcome.

“Yes,” the Priore went on in a serious but by no means sad tone: “five months and a half, or six months and a half after I have seen you again, my life having found its full complement of happiness will be extinguished

Come face al mancar dell’alimento”

(as the little lamp is when its oil runs dry). “Before the supreme moment, I shall probably pass a month or two without speaking, after which I shall be received into Our Father’s Bosom; provided always that He finds that I have performed my duty in the post in which He has placed me as a sentinel.

“But you, you are worn out with exhaustion, your emotion makes you ready for sleep. Since I began to expect you, I have hidden a loaf of bread and a bottle of brandy for you in the great chest which holds my instruments. Give yourself that sustenance, and try to collect enough strength to listen to me for a few moments longer. It lies in my power to tell you a number of things before night shall have given place altogether to days; at present I see them a great deal more distinctly than perhaps I shall see them tomorrow. For, my child, we are at all times frail vessels, and we must always take that frailty into account. To-morrow, it may be, the old man, the earthly man in me will be occupied with preparations for my death, and tomorrow evening at nine o’clock, you will have to leave me.”

Fabrizio having obeyed him in silence, as was his custom:

“Then, it is true,” the old man went on, “that when you tried to see Waterloo you found nothing at first but a prison?”

“Yes, Father,” replied Fabrizio in amazement.

“Well, that was a rare piece of good fortune, for, warned by my voice, your soul can prepare itself for another prison, far different in its austerity, far more terrible! Probably you will escape from it only by a crime; but, thanks be to heaven, that crime will not have been committed by you. Never fall into crime, however violently you may be tempted; I seem to see that it will be a question of killing an innocent man, who, without knowing it, usurps your rights; if you resist the violent temptation which will seem to be justified by the laws of honour, your life will be most happy in the eyes of

men . . . and reasonably happy in the eyes of the sage," he added after a moment's reflexion; "you will die like me, my son, sitting upon a wooden seat, far from all luxury and having seen the hollowness of luxury, and like me not having to reproach yourself with any grave sin.

"And now, the discussion of your future state is at an end between us, I could add nothing of any importance. It is in vain that I have tried to see how long this imprisonment is to last; is it to be for six months, a year, ten years? I have been able to discover nothing; apparently I have made some error, and heaven has wished to punish me by the distress of this uncertainty. I have seen only that after your prison, but I do not know whether it is to be at the actual moment of your leaving it, there will be what I call a crime; but, fortunately, I believe I can be sure that it will not be committed by you. If you are weak enough to involve yourself in this crime, all the rest of my calculations becomes simply one long error. Then you will not die with peace in your soul, on a wooden seat and clad in white." As he said these words, Priore Blanès attempted to rise; it was then that Fabrizio noticed the ravages of time; it took him nearly a minute to get upon his feet and to turn towards Fabrizio. Our hero allowed him to do this, standing motionless and silent. The Priore flung himself into his arms again and again; he embraced him with extreme affection. After which he went on, with all the gaiety of the old days: "Try to make a place for yourself among all my instruments where you can sleep with some comfort; take my furs; you will find several of great value which the Duchessa Sanseverina sent me four years ago. She asked me for a forecast of your fate, which I took care not to give her, while keeping her furs and her fine quadrant. Every announcement of the future is a breach of the rule, and contains this danger, that it may alter the event, in which case the whole science falls to the ground, like a child's card-castle; and besides, there were things that it was hard to say to that Duchessa who is always so charming. But let me warn you, do not be startled in your sleep by the bells, which will make a terrible din in your ear when the men come to ring for the seven o'clock mass; later on, in the stage below, they will set the big campanarie going, which shakes all my instruments. To-day is the feast of San Giovila, Martyr and Soldier. As you know, the little village of Grianta has the same patron as the great city of Brescia, which, by the way, led to a most amusing mistake on the part of my illustrious master, Giacomo Marini of Ravenna. More than once he announced to me that I should have quite a fine career in the church; he believed that I was to be the curate of the

magnificent church of San Giovila, at Brescia; I have been the curate of a little village of seven hundred and fifty chimneys! But all has been for the best. I have seen, and not ten years ago, that if I had been curate at Brescia, my destiny would have been to be cast into prison on a hill in Moravia, the Spielberg. To-morrow I shall bring you all manner of delicacies pilfered from the great dinner which I am giving to all the clergy of the district who are coming to sing at my high mass. I shall leave them down below, but do not make any attempt to see me, do not come down to take possession of the good things until you have heard me go out again. You must not see me again by daylight, and as the sun sets tomorrow at twenty-seven minutes past seven, I shall not come up to embrace you until about eight, and it is necessary that you depart while the hours are still numbered by nine, that is to say before the clock has struck ten. Take care that you are not seen in the windows of the campanile: the police have your description, and they are to some extent under the orders of your brother, who is a famous tyrant. The Marchese del Dongo is growing feeble," added Blanès with a sorrowful air, "and if he were to see you again, perhaps he would let something pass to you, from hand to hand. But such benefits, tainted with deceit, do not become a man like yourself, whose strength will lie one day in his conscience. The Marchese abhors his son Ascanio, and it is on that son that the five or six millions that he possesses will devolve. That is justice. You, at his death, will have a pension of 4,000 francs, and fifty ells of black cloth for your servants' mourning."

CHAPTER NINE

Fabrizio's soul was exalted by the old man's speech, by his own keen attention to it, and by his extreme exhaustion. He had great difficulty in getting to sleep, and his slumber was disturbed by dreams, presages perhaps of the future; in the morning, at ten o'clock, he was awakened by the whole belfry's beginning to shake; an alarming noise seemed to come from outside. He rose in bewilderment and at first imagined that the end of the world had come; then he thought that he was in prison; it took him some time to recognise the sound of the big bell, which forty peasants were setting in motion in honour of the great San Giovila; ten would have been enough.

Fabrizio looked for a convenient place from which to see without being seen; he discovered that from this great height his gaze swept the gardens, and even the inner courtyard of his father's castle. He had forgotten this. The idea of that father arriving at the ultimate bourne of life altered all his feelings. He could even make out the sparrows that were hopping in search of crumbs upon the wide balcony of the dining-room. "They are the descendants of the ones I used to tame long ago," he said to himself. This balcony, like every balcony in the mansion, was decorated with a large number of orange-trees in earthenware tubs, of different sizes: this sight melted his heart; the view of that inner courtyard thus decorated, with its sharply defined shadows outlined by a radiant sun, was truly majestic.

The thought of his father's failing health came back to his mind. "But it is really singular," he said to himself, "my father is only thirty-five years older than I am; thirty-five and twenty-three make only fifty-eight!" His eyes, fixed on the windows of the bedroom of that stern man who had never loved him, filled with tears. He shivered, and a sudden chill ran through his veins when he thought he saw his father crossing a terrace planted with orange-trees which was on a level with his room; but it was only one of the servants. Close underneath the campanile a number of girls dressed in white and split up into different bands were occupied in tracing patterns with red, blue and yellow flowers on the pavement of the streets through which the procession was to pass. But there was a spectacle which spoke with a more living voice

to Fabrizio's soul: from the campanile his gaze shot down to the two branches of the lake, at a distance of several leagues, and this sublime view soon made him forget all the others; it awakened in him the most lofty sentiments. All the memories of his childhood came crowding to besiege his mind; and this day which he spent imprisoned in a belfry was perhaps one of the happiest days of his life.

Happiness carried him to an exaltation of mind quite foreign to his nature; he considered the incidents of life, he, still so young, as if already he had arrived at its farthest goal. "I must admit that, since I came to Parma," he said to himself at length after several hours of delicious musings, "I have known no tranquil and perfect joy such as I used to find at Naples in galloping over the roads of Vomero or pacing the shores of Miseno. All the complicated interests of that nasty little court have made me nasty also. . . . I even believe that it would be a sorry happiness for me to humiliate my enemies if I had any; but I have no enemy. . . . Stop a moment!" he suddenly interjected, "I have got an enemy, Giletti. . . . And here is a curious thing," he said to himself, "the pleasure that I should feel in seeing such an ugly fellow go to all the devils in hell has survived the very slight fancy that I had for little Marietta. . . . She does not come within a mile of the Duchessa d'A ——— , to whom I was obliged to make love at Naples, after I had told her that I was in love with her. Good God, how bored I have been during the long assignations which that fair Duchessa used to accord me; never anything like that in the tumbledown bedroom, serving as a kitchen as well, in which little Marietta received me twice, and for two minutes on each occasion.

"Oh, good God, what on earth can those people have to eat? They make one pity them! . . . I ought to have settled on her and the mammaccia a pension of three beefsteaks, payable daily. . . . Little Marietta," he went on, "used to distract me from the evil thoughts which the proximity of that court put in my mind.

"I should perhaps have done well to adopt the caffè life, as the Duchessa said; she seemed to incline in that direction, and she has far more intelligence than I. Thanks to her generosity, or indeed merely with that pension of 4,000 francs and that fund of 40,000 invested at Lyons, which my mother intends for me, I should always have a horse and a few scudi to

spend on digging and collecting a cabinet. Since it appears that I am not to know the taste of love, there will always be those other interests to be my great sources of happiness; I should like, before 1 die, to go back to visit the battlefield of Waterloo and try to identify the meadow where I was so neatly lifted from my horse and left sitting on the ground. That pilgrimage accomplished, I should return constantly to this sublime lake; nothing else as beautiful is to be seen in the world, for my heart at least. Why go so far afield in search of happiness? It is there, beneath my eyes!

"Ah," said Fabrizio to himself, "there is this objection: the police drive me away from the Lake of Como, but I am younger than the people who are setting those police on my track. Here," he added with a smile, "I should certainly not find a Duchessa d'A —— , but I should find one of those little girls down there who are strewing flowers on the pavement, and, to tell the truth, I should care for her just as much. Hypocrisy freezes me, even in love, and our great ladies aim at effects that are too sublime. Napoleon has given them new ideas as to conduct and constancy.

"The devil!" he suddenly exclaimed, drawing back his head from the window, as though he had been afraid of being recognised despite the screen of the enormous wooden shutter which protected the bells from rain, "here comes a troop of police in full dress." And indeed, ten policemen, of whom four were non-commissioned officers, had come into sight at the top of the village street. The serjeant distributed them at intervals of a hundred yards along the course which the procession was to take. "Everyone knows me here; if they see me, I shall make but one bound from the shores of the Lake of Como to the Spielberg, where they will fasten to each of my legs a chain weighing a hundred and ten pounds: and what a grief for the Duchessa!"

It took Fabrizio two or three minutes to realise that, for one thing, he was stationed at a height of more than eighty feet, that the place in which he stood was comparatively dark, that the eyes of the people who might be looking up at him were blinded by a dazzling sun, in addition to which they were walking about, their eyes wide open, in streets all the houses of which had just been whitewashed with lime, in honour of the festa of San Giovila. Despite all these clear and obvious reasons, Fabrizio's Italian nature would not have been in a state, from that moment, to enjoy any pleasure in the spectacle, had he not interposed between himself and the policemen a strip

of old cloth which he nailed to the frame of the window, piercing a couple of holes in it for his eyes.

The bells had been making the air throb for ten minutes, the procession was coming out of the church, the mortaretti started to bang. Fabrizio turned his head and recognised that little terrace, adorned with a parapet and overlooking the lake, where so often, when he was a boy, he had risked his life to watch the mortaretti go off between his legs, with the result that on the mornings of public holidays his mother liked to see him by her side.

It should be explained that the mortaretti (or little mortars) are nothing else than gun-barrels which are sawn through so as to leave them only four inches long; that is why the peasants greedily collect all the gun-barrels which, since 1796, European policy has been sowing broadcast over the plains of Lombardy. Once they have been reduced to a length of four inches, these little guns are loaded to the muzzle, they are planted in the ground in a vertical position, and a train of powder is laid from one to the next; they are drawn up in three lines like a battalion, and to the number of two or three hundred, in some suitable emplacement near the route along which the procession is to pass. When the Blessed Sacrament approaches, a match is put to the train of powder, and then begins a running fire of sharp explosions, utterly irregular and quite ridiculous; the women are wild with joy. Nothing is so gay as the sound of these mortaretti, heard at a distance on the lake and softened by the rocking of the water; this curious sound, which had so often been the delight of his boyhood, banished the somewhat too solemn thoughts by which our hero was being besieged; he went to find the Priore's big astronomical telescope, and recognised the majority of the men and women who were following the procession. A number of charming little girls, whom Fabrizio had last seen at the age of eleven or twelve, were now superb women in the full flower of the most vigorous youth; they made our hero's courage revive, and to speak to them he would readily have braved the police.

After the procession had passed and had re-entered the church by a side door which was out of Fabrizio's sight, the heat soon became intense even up in the belfry; the inhabitants returned to their homes, and a great silence fell upon the village. Several boats took on board loads of contadini returning to Bellagio, Menaggio and other villages situated on the lake; Fabrizio could

distinguish the sound of each stroke of the oars: so simple a detail as this sent him into an ecstasy; his present joy was composed of all the unhappiness, all the irritation that he found in the complicated life of a court. How happy he would have been at this moment to be sailing for a league over that beautiful lake which looked so calm and reflected so clearly the depth of the sky above! He heard the door at the foot of the campanile opened: it was the Priore's old servant who brought in a great hamper, and he had all the difficulty in the world in restraining himself from speaking to her. "She is almost as fond of me as of her master," he said to himself, "and besides, I am leaving to-night at nine o'clock; would she not keep the oath of secrecy I should make her swear, if only for a few hours? But," Fabrizio reminded himself, "I should be vexing my friend! I might get him into trouble with the police!" and he let Ghita go without speaking to her. He made an excellent dinner, then settled himself down to sleep for a few minutes: he did not awake until half-past eight in the evening; the Priore Blanès was shaking him by the arm; it was dark.

Blanès was extremely tired, and looked fifty years older than the night before. He said nothing more about serious matters, sitting in his wooden armchair. "Embrace me," he said to Fabrizio. He clasped him again and again in his arms. "Death," he said at last, "which is coming to put an end to this long life, will have nothing about it so painful as this separation. I have a purse which I shall leave in Ghita's custody, with orders to draw on it for her own needs, but to hand over to you what is left, should you ever come to ask for it. I know her; after those instructions, she is capable, from economy on your behalf, of not buying meat four times in the year, if you do not give her quite definite orders. You may yourself be reduced to penury, and the oboi of your aged friend will be of service to you. Expect nothing from your brother but atrocious behaviour, and try to earn money by some work which will make you useful to society. I foresee strange storms; perhaps, in fifty years' time, the world will have no more room for idlers! Your mother and aunt may fail you, your sisters will have to obey their husbands. . . . Away with you, away with you, fly!" exclaimed Blanès urgently; he had just heard a little sound in the clock which warned him that ten was about to strike, and he would not even allow Fabrizio to give him a farewell embrace.

"Hurry, hurry!" he cried to him; "it will take you at least a minute to get down the stair; take care not to fall, that would be a terrible omen." Fabrizio

dashed down the staircase and emerging on to the piazza began to run. He had scarcely arrived opposite his father's castle when the bell sounded ten times; each stroke reverberated in his bosom, where it left a singular sense of disturbance. He stopped to think, or rather to give himself up to the passionate feelings inspired in him by the contemplation of that majestic edifice which he had judged so coldly the night before. He was recalled from his musings by the sound of footsteps; he looked up and found himself surrounded by four constables. He had a brace of excellent pistols, the priming of which he had renewed while he dined; the slight sound that he made in cocking them attracted the attention of one of the constables, and he was within an inch of being arrested. He saw the danger he ran, and decided to fire the first shot; he would be justified in doing so, for this was the sole method open to him of resisting four well-armed men. Fortunately, the constables, who were going round to clear the osteria, had not shown themselves altogether irresponsive to the hospitality that they had received in several of those sociable resorts; they did not make up their minds quickly enough to do their duty. Fabrizio took to his heels and ran. The constables went a few yards, running also, and shouting "Stop! Stop!" then everything relapsed into silence. After every three hundred yards Fabrizio halted to recover his breath. "The sound of my pistols nearly made me get caught; this is just the sort of thing that would make the Duchessa tell me, should it ever be granted me to see her lovely eyes again, that my mind finds pleasure in contemplating what is going to happen in ten years' time, and forgets to look out for what is actually happening beneath my nose."

Fabrizio shuddered at the thought of the danger he had just escaped; he increased his pace, and presently found himself impelled to run, which was not over-prudent, as it attracted the attention of several contadini who were going back to their homes. He could not bring himself to stop until he had reached the mountain, more than a league from Grianta, and even when he had stopped, he broke into a cold sweat at the thought of the Spielberg.

"There's a fine fright!" he said aloud: on hearing the sound of this word, he was almost tempted to feel ashamed. "But does not my aunt tell me that the thing I most need is to learn to make allowances for myself? I am always comparing myself with a model of perfection, which cannot exist. Very well, I forgive myself my fright, for, from another point of view, I was quite prepared to defend my liberty, and certainly all four of them would not have

remained on their feet to carry me off to prison. What I am doing at this moment," he went on, "is not military; instead of retiring rapidly, after having attained my object, and perhaps given the alarm to my enemies, I am amusing myself with a fancy more ridiculous perhaps than all the good Priore's predictions."

For indeed, instead of retiring along the shortest line, and gaining the shore of Lake Maggiore, where his boat was awaiting him, he made an enormous circuit to go and visit his tree. The reader may perhaps remember the love that Fabrizio bore for a chestnut tree planted by his mother twenty-three years earlier. "It would be quite worthy of my brother," he said to himself, "to have had the tree cut down; but those creatures are incapable of delicate shades of feeling; he will never have thought of it. And besides, that would not be a bad augury," he added with firmness. Two hours later he was shocked by what he saw; mischief-makers or a storm had broken one of the main branches of the young tree, which hung down withered; Fabrizio cut it off reverently, using his dagger, and smoothed the cut carefully, so that the rain should not get inside the trunk. Then, although time was highly precious to him, for day was about to break, he spent a good hour in turning the soil round his dear tree. All these acts of folly accomplished, he went rapidly on his way towards Lake Maggiore. All things considered, he was not at all sad; the tree was coming on well, was more vigorous than ever, and in five years had almost doubled in height. The branch was only an accident of no consequence; once it had been cut off, it did no more harm

to the tree, which indeed would grow all the better if its spread began higher from the ground.

Fabrizio had not gone a league when a dazzling band of white indicated to the east the peaks of the Resegon di Lee, a mountain famous throughout the district. The road which he was following became thronged with contadini; but, instead of adopting military tactics, Fabrizio let himself be melted by the sublime or touching aspect of these forests in the neighbourhood of Lake Como. They are perhaps the finest in the world; I do not mean to say those that bring in most new money, as the Swiss would say, but those that speak most eloquently to the soul. To listen to this language in the position in

which Fabrizio found himself, an object for the attentions of the gentlemen of the Lombardo–Venetian police, was really childish. “I am half a league from the frontier,” he reminded himself at length, “I am going to meet doganieri and constables making their morning rounds: this coat of fine cloth will look suspicious, they will ask me for my passport; now that passport is inscribed at full length with my name, which is marked down for prison; so here I am under the regrettable necessity of committing a murder. If, as is usual, the police are going about in pairs, I cannot wait quietly to fire until one of them tries to take me by the collar; he has only to clutch me for a moment while he falls, and off I go to the Spielberg.” Fabrizio, horrified most of all by the necessity of firing first, possibly on an old soldier who had served under his uncle, Conte Pietranera, ran to hide himself in the hollow trunk of an enormous chestnut; he was renewing the priming of his pistols, when he heard a man coming towards him through the wood, singing very well a delicious air from Mercadante, which was popular at that time in Lombardy.

“There is a good omen for me,” he said to himself. This air, to which he listened religiously, took from him the little spark of anger which was finding its way into his reasonings. He scrutinised the high road carefully, in both directions, and saw no one: “The singer must be coming along some side road,” he said to himself. Almost at that moment, he saw a footman, very neatly dressed in the English style and mounted on a hack, who was coming towards him at a walk, leading a fine thoroughbred, which however was perhaps a little too thin.

“Ah! If I reasoned like Conte Mosca,” thought Fabrizio, “when he assures me that the risks a man runs are always the measure of his rights over his neighbours, I should blow out this servant’s brains with a pistol-shot, and, once I was mounted on the thin horse, I should laugh aloud at all the police in the world. As soon as I was safely in Parma, I should send money to the man, or to his widow . . . but it would be a horrible thing to do!”

CHAPTER TEN

Moralising thus, Fabrizio sprang down on to the high road which runs from Lombardy into Switzerland: at this point, it is fully four or five feet below the level of the forest. “If my man takes fright,” he said to himself, “he will go off at a gallop, and I shall be stranded here looking the picture of a fool.” At this moment he found himself only ten yards from the footman, who had stopped singing: Fabrizio could see in his eyes that he was frightened, he was perhaps going to turn his horses. Still without having come to any decision, Fabrizio made a bound, and seized the thin horse by the bridle.

“My friend,” he said to the footman, “I am not an ordinary thief, for I am going to begin by giving you twenty francs, but I am obliged to borrow your horse; I shall be killed if I don’t get away pretty quickly. I have the four Riva brothers on my heels, those great hunters whom you probably know; they caught me just now in their sister’s bedroom, I jumped out of the window, and here I am. They dashed out into the forest with their dogs and guns. I hid myself in that big hollow chestnut because I saw one of them cross the road; their dogs will track me down. I am going to mount your horse and gallop a league beyond Como; I am going to Milan to throw myself at the Viceroy’s feet. I shall leave your horse at the post-house with two napoleons for yourself, if you consent with good grace. If you offer the slightest resistance, I shall kill you with these pistols you see here. If, after I have gone, you set the police on my track, my cousin, the gallant Conte Alari, Equerry to the Emperor, will take good care to break your bones for you.”

Fabrizio invented the substance of this speech as he went on, uttering it in a wholly pacific tone.

“As far as that goes,” he went on with a laugh, “my name is no secret; I am the Marchesino Ascanio del Dongo, my castle is quite close to here, at Grianta. Damn you!” he cried, raising his voice, “will you let go the horse!” The servant, stupefied, never breathed a word. Fabrizio transferred the pistol to his left hand, seized the bridle which the other dropped, sprang into the saddle, and made off at a canter. When he had gone three hundred yards, it

occurred to him that he had forgotten to give the man the twenty francs he had promised him; he stopped; there was still no one upon the road but the footman, who was following him at a gallop; he signalled to him with his handkerchief to come on, and when he judged him to be fifty yards off, flung a handful of small change on to the road and went on again. >From a distance he looked and saw the footman gathering up the money. “There is a truly reasonable man,” Fabrizio said to himself with a laugh, “not an unnecessary word.” He proceeded rapidly southwards, halted, towards midday, at a lonely house, and took the road again a few hours later. At two o’clock in the morning he was on the shore of Lake Maggiore; he soon caught sight of his boat, which was tacking to and fro; at the agreed signal, it made for the shore. He could see no contadino to whom to hand over the horse, so he gave the noble animal its liberty, and three hours later was at Belgirate. There, finding himself on friendly soil, he took a little rest; he was exceedingly joyful, everything had proved a complete success. Dare we indicate the true causes of his joy? His tree showed a superb growth, and his soul had been refreshed by the deep affection which he had found in the arms of Priore Blanès. “Does he really believe,” he asked himself, “in all the predictions he has made me? Or was he, since my brother has given me the reputation of a Jacobin, a man without law or honour, sticking at nothing, was he seeking simply to bind me not to yield to the temptation to break the head of some animal who may have done me a bad turn?” Two days later, Fabrizio was at Parma, where he greatly amused the Duchessa and the Conte, when he related to them, with the utmost exactitude, which he always observed, the whole story of his travels.

On his arrival, Fabrizio found the porter and all the servants of the palazzo Sanseverina wearing the tokens of the deepest mourning.

“Whom have we lost?” he inquired of the Duchessa.

“That excellent man whom people called my husband has just died at Baden. He has left me this palazzo, that had been arranged beforehand, but as a sign of good fellowship he has added a legacy of 300,000 francs, which embarrasses me greatly; I have no desire to surrender it to his niece, the Marchesa Raversi, who plays the most damnable tricks on me every day. You are interested in art, you must find me some good sculptor; I shall erect

a tomb to the Duca which will cost 300,000 francs." The Conte began telling anecdotes about the Raversi.

"I have tried to win her by kindness, but all in vain," said the Duchessa. "As for the Duca's nephews, I have made them all colonels or generals. In return for which, not a month passes without their sending me some abominable anonymous letter; I have been obliged to engage a secretary simply to read letters of that sort."

"And these anonymous letters are their mildest offence," the Conte joined in; "they make a regular business of inventing infamous accusations. A score of times I could have brought the whole gang before the courts, and Your Excellency may imagine," he went on, addressing Fabrizio, "whether my good judges would have convicted them."

"Ah, well, that is what spoils it all for me," replied Fabrizio with a simplicity which was quite refreshing at court; "I should prefer to see them sentenced by magistrates judging according to their conscience."

"You would oblige me greatly, since you are travelling with a view to gaining instruction, if you would give me the addresses of such magistrates; I shall write to them before I go to bed."

"If I were Minister, this absence of judges who were honest men would wound my self-respect."

"But it seems to me," said the Conte, "that Your Excellency, who is so fond of the French, and did indeed once lend them the aid of his invincible arm, is forgetting for the moment one of their great maxims: 'It is better to kill the devil than to let the devil kill you.' I should like to see how you would govern these burning souls, who read every day the History of the Revolution in France, with judges who would acquit the people whom I accuse. They would reach the point of not convicting the most obviously guilty scoundrels, and would fancy themselves Brutuses. But I should like to pick a crow with you; does not your delicate soul feel a touch of remorse at the thought of that fine (though perhaps a little too thin) horse which you have just abandoned on the shore of Lake Maggiore?"

“I fully intend,” said Fabrizio, with the utmost seriousness, “to send whatever is necessary to the owner of the horse to recompense him for the cost of advertising and any other expenses which he may be made to incur by the contadini who may have found it; I shall study the Milan newspaper most carefully to find the announcement of a missing horse; I know the description of that one very well.”

“He is truly primitive” said the Conte to the Duchessa. “And where would Your Excellency be now,” he went on with a smile, “if, while he was galloping away hell for leather on this borrowed horse, it had taken it into its head to make a false step? You would be in the Spielberg, my dear young nephew, and all my authority would barely have managed to secure the reduction by thirty pounds of the weight of the chain attached to each of your legs. You would have had some ten years to spend in that pleasure-resort; perhaps your legs would have become swollen and gangrened, then they would have cut them clean off.”

“Oh, for pity’s sake, don’t go any farther with so sad a romance!” cried the Duchessa, with tears in her eyes. “Here he is back again. . . .”

“And I am more delighted than you, you may well believe,” replied the Minister with great seriousness, “but after all why did not this cruel boy come to me for a passport in a suitable name, since he was anxious to penetrate into Lombardy? On the first news of his arrest, I should have set off for Milan, and the friends I have in those parts would have obligingly shut their eyes and pretended to believe that their police had arrested a subject of the Prince of Parma. The story of your adventures is charming, amusing, I readily agree,” the Conte went on, adopting a less sinister tone; “your rush from the wood on to the high road quite thrills me; but, between ourselves, since this servant held your life in his hands, you had the right to take his. We are about to arrange a brilliant future for Your Excellency; at least, the Signora here orders me to do so, and I do not believe that my greatest enemies can accuse me of having ever disobeyed her commands. What a bitter grief for her and for myself if, in this sort of steeplechase which you appear to have been riding on this thin horse, he had made a false step! It would almost have been better,” the Conte added, “if the horse had broken your neck for you.”

“You are very tragic this evening, my friend,” said the Duchessa, quite overcome.

“That is because we are surrounded by tragic events,” replied the Conte, also with emotion; “we are not in France, where everything ends in song, or in imprisonment for a year or two, and really it is wrong of me to speak of all this to you in a jocular tone. Well, now, my young nephew, just suppose that I find a chance to make you a Bishop, for really I cannot begin with the Archbishopric of Parma, as is desired, most reasonably, by the Signora Duchessa here present; in that Bishopric, where you will be far removed from our sage counsels, just tell us roughly what your policy will be?”

“To kill the devil rather than let him kill me, in the admirable words of my friends the French,” replied Fabrizio with blazing eyes; “to keep, by every means in my power, including pistols, the position you will have secured for me. I have read in the del Dongo genealogy the story of that ancestor of ours who built the castle of Grianta. Towards the end of his life, his good friend Galeazze, Duke of Milan, sent him to visit a fortress on our lake; they were afraid of another invasion by the Swiss. ‘I must just write a few civil words to the governor,’ the Duke of Milan said to him as he was sending him off. He wrote and handed our ancestor a note of a couple of lines; then he asked for it back to seal it. ‘It will be more polite,’ the Prince explained. Vespasiano del Dongo started off, but, as he was sailing over the lake, an old Greek tale came into his mind, for he was a man of learning; he opened his liege lord’s letter and found inside an order addressed to the governor of the castle to put him to death as soon as he should arrive. The Sforza, too much intent on the trick he was playing our ancestor, had left a space between the end of the letter and his signature; Vespasiano del Dongo wrote in this space an order proclaiming himself Governor General of all the castles on the lake, and tore off the original letter. Arriving at the fort, where his authority was duly acknowledged, he flung the commandant down a well, declared war on the Sforza, and after a few years exchanged his fortress ‘for those vast estates which have made the fortune of every branch of our family, and one day will bring in to me, personally, an income of four thousand lire.”

“You talk like an academician,” exclaimed the Conte, laughing; “that was a bold stroke with a vengeance; but it is only once in ten years that one has a chance to do anything so sensational. A creature who is half an idiot, but

who keeps a sharp look-out, and acts prudently all his life, often enjoys the pleasure of triumphing over men of imagination. It was by a foolish error of imagination that Napoleon was led to surrender to the prudent John Bull, instead of seeking to conquer America. John Bull, in his counting-house, had a hearty laugh at his letter in which he quotes Themistocles. In all ages, the base Sancho Panza triumphs, you will find, in the long run, over the sublime Don Quixote. If you are willing to agree to do nothing extraordinary, I have no doubt that you will be a highly respected, if not a highly respectable Bishop. In any case, what I said just now holds good: Your Excellency acted with great levity in the affair of the horse; he was within a finger's breadth of perpetual imprisonment."

This statement made Fabrizio shudder. He remained plunged in a profound astonishment. "Was that," he wondered, "the prison with which I am threatened? Is that the crime which I was not to commit?" The predictions of Blanès, which as prophecies he utterly derided, assumed in his eyes all the importance of authentic forecasts.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" the Duchessa asked him, in surprise; "the Conte has plunged you in a sea of dark thoughts."

"I am illuminated by a new truth, and, instead of revolting against it, my mind adopts it. It is true, I passed very near to an endless imprisonment! But that footman looked so nice in his English jacket! It would have been such a pity to kill him!"

The Minister was enchanted with his little air of wisdom.

"He is excellent in every respect," he said, with his eyes on the Duchessa. "I may tell you, my friend, that you have made a conquest, and one that is perhaps the most desirable of all."

"Ah!" thought Fabrizio, "now for some joke about little Marietta." He was mistaken; the Conte went on to say:

"Your Gospel simplicity has won the heart of our venerable Archbishop, Father Landriani. One of these days we are going to make a Grand Vicar of you, and the charming part of the whole joke is that the three existing Grand

Vicars, all most deserving men, workers, two of whom, I fancy, were Grand Vicars before you were born, will demand, in a finely worded letter addressed to their Archbishop, that you shall rank first among them. These gentlemen base their plea in the first place upon your virtues, and also upon the fact that you are the great-nephew of the famous Archbishop Ascanio del Dongo. When I learned the respect that they felt for your virtues, I immediately made the senior Vicar General's nephew a captain; he had been a lieutenant ever since the siege of Tarragona by Marshal Suchet."

"Go right away now, dressed as you are, and pay a friendly visit to your Archbishop!" exclaimed the Duchessa. "Tell him about your sister's wedding; when he hears that she is to be a Duchessa, he will think you more apostolic than ever. But, remember, you know nothing of what the Conte has just told you about your future promotion."

Fabrizio hastened to the archiépiscopal palace; there he shewed himself simple and modest, a tone which he assumed only too easily; whereas it required an effort for him to play the great gentleman. As he listened to the somewhat prolix Stories of Monsignor Landriani, he was saying to himself: "Ought I to have fired my pistol at the footman who was leading the thin horse?" His reason said to him: "Yes," but his heart could not accustom itself to the bleeding image of the handsome young man, falling from his horse, all disfigured.

"That prison in which I should have been swallowed up, if the horse had stumbled, was that the prison with which I was threatened by all those forecasts?"

This question was of the utmost importance to him, and the Archbishop was gratified by his air of profound attention.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

On leaving the Archbishop's Palace, Fabrizio hastened to see little Marietta; he could hear from the street the loud voice of Giletti, who had sent out for wine and was regaling himself with his friends the prompter and the candle-snuffers. The mammaccia, who played the part of mother, came alone in answer to his signal.

"A lot has happened since you were here," she cried; "two or three of our actors are accused of having celebrated the great Napoleon's festa with an orgy, and our poor company, which they say is Jacobin, has been ordered to leave the States of Parma, and evviva Napoleone! But the Minister has had a finger in that pie, they say. One thing certain is that Giletti has got money, I don't know how much, but I've seen him with a fistful of scudi. Marietta has had five scudi from our manager to pay for the journey to Mantua and Venice, and I have had one. She is still in love with you, but Giletti frightens her; three days ago, at the last performance we gave, he absolutely wanted to kill her; he dealt her two proper blows, and, what was abominable of him, tore her blue shawl. If you would care to. give her a blue shawl, you would be a very good boy, and we can say that we won it in a lottery. The drum-major of the carabinieri is giving an assault-at-arms tomorrow, you will find the hour posted up at all the street corners. Come and see us; if he has gone to the assault, and we have any reason to hope that he will stay away for some time, I shall be at the window, and I shall give you a signal to come up. Try to bring us something really nice, and Marietta will be madly in love with you."

As he made his way down the winding staircase of this foul rookery, Fabrizio was filled with compunction. "I have not altered in the least," he said to himself; "all the fine resolutions I made on the shore of our lake, when I looked at life with so philosophic an eye, have gone to the winds. My mind has lost its normal balance; the whole thing was a dream, and vanishes before the stern reality. Now would be the time for action," he told himself as he entered the palazzo Sanseverina about eleven o'clock that evening. But it was in vain that he sought in his heart for the courage to speak with that

sublime sincerity which had seemed to him so easy, the night he spent by the shore of the Lake of Como. “I am going to vex the person whom I love best in the world; if I speak, I shall simply seem to be jesting in the worst of taste; I am not worth anything, really, except in certain moments of exaltation.”

“The Conte has behaved admirably towards me,” he said to the Duchessa, after he had given her an account of his visit to the Archbishop’s Palace; “I appreciate his conduct all the more, in that I think I am right in saying that personally I have made only a very moderate impression on him: my behaviour towards him ought therefore to be strictly correct. He has his excavations at Sanguigna, about which he is still madly keen, if one is to judge, that is, by his expedition the day before yesterday: he went twelve leagues at a gallop in order to spend a couple of hours with his workmen. If they find fragments of statues in the ancient temple, the foundations of which he has just laid bare, he is afraid of their being stolen; I should like to propose to him that I should go and spend a night or two at Sanguigna. To-morrow, about five, I have to see the Archbishop again; I can start in the evening and take advantage of the cool night air for the journey.”

The Duchessa did not at first reply.

“One would think you were seeking excuses for staying away from me,” she said to him at length with extreme affection: “No sooner do you come back from Belgirate than you find a reason for going off again.”

“Here is a fine opportunity for speaking,” thought Fabrizio. “But by the lake I was a trifle mad; I did not realise, in my enthusiasm for sincerity, that my compliment ended in an impertinence. It was a question of saying: ‘I love you with the most devoted friendship, etc., etc., but my heart is not susceptible to love.’ Is not that as much as to say: ‘I see that you are in love with me: but take care, I cannot pay you back in the same coin.’ If it is love that she feels, the Duchessa may be annoyed at its being guessed, and she will be revolted by my impudence if all that she feels for me is friendship pure and simple . . . and that is one of the offences people never forgive.”

While he weighed these important thoughts in his mind, Fabrizio, quite unconsciously, was pacing up and down the drawing-room with the grave air, full of dignity, of a man who sees disaster staring him in the face.

The Duchessa gazed at him with admiration; this was no longer the child she had seen come into the world, this was no longer the nephew always ready to obey her; this was a serious man, a man whom it would be delicious to make fall in love with her. She rose from the ottoman on which she was sitting, and, flinging herself into his arms in a transport of emotion:

“So you want to run away from me?” she asked him.

“No,” he replied with the air of a Roman Emperor, “but I want to act wisely.”

This speech was capable of several interpretations; Fabrizio did not feel that he had the courage to go any farther and to run the risk of wounding this adorable woman. He was too young, too susceptible to sudden emotion; his brain could not supply him with any elegant turn of speech to give expression to what he wished to say. By a natural transport, and in defiance of all reason, he took this charming woman in his arms and smothered her in kisses. At that moment the Conte’s carriage could be heard coming into the courtyard, and almost immediately the Conte himself entered the room; he seemed greatly moved.

“You inspire very singular passions,” he said to Fabrizio, who stood still, almost dumbfoundered by this remark.

“The Archbishop had this evening the audience which His Serene Highness grants him every Thursday; the Prince has just been telling me that the Archbishop, who seemed greatly troubled, began with a set speech, learned by heart, and extremely clever, of which at first the Prince could understand nothing at all. Landriani ended by declaring that it was important for the Church in Parma that Monsignor Fabrizio del Dongo should be appointed his First Vicar General, and, in addition, as soon as he should have completed his twenty-fourth year, his Coadjutor with eventual succession.

“The last clause alarmed me, I must admit,” said the Conte: “it is going a little too fast, and I was afraid of an outburst from the Prince; but he looked at me with a smile, and said to me in French: ‘Ce sont là de vos coups, monsieur!’

“ ‘I can take my oath, before God and before Your Highness,’ I exclaimed with all the unction possible, ‘that I knew absolutely nothing about the words eventual succession.’ Then I told him the truth, what in fact we were discussing together here a few hours ago; I added, impulsively, that, so far as the future was concerned, I should regard myself as most bounteously rewarded with His Highness’s favour if he would deign to allow me a minor Bishopric to begin with. The Prince must have believed me, for he thought fit to be gracious; he said to me with the greatest possible simplicity: ‘This is an official matter between the Archbishop and myself; you do not come into it at all; the worthy man delivered me a kind of report, of great length and tedious to a degree, at the end of which he came to an official proposal; I answered him very coldly that the person in question was extremely young, and, moreover, a very recent arrival at my court, that I should almost be giving the impression that I was honouring a bill of exchange drawn upon me by the Emperor, in giving the prospect of so high a dignity to the son of one of the principal officers of his Lombardo–Venetian Kingdom. The Archbishop protested that no recommendation of that sort had been made. That was a pretty stupid thing to say to me. I was surprised to hear it come from a man of his experience; but he always loses his head when he speaks to me, and this evening he was more troubled than ever, which gave me the idea that he was passionately anxious to secure the appointment. I told him that I knew better than he that there had been no recommendation from any high quarter in favour of this del Dongo, that nobody at my court denied his capacity, that they did not speak at all too badly of his morals, but that I was afraid of his being liable to enthusiasm, and that I had made it a rule never to promote to considerable positions fools of that sort, with whom a Prince can never be sure of anything. Then,’ His Highness went on, ‘I had to submit to a fresh tirade almost as long as the first; the Archbishop sang me the praises of the enthusiasm of the Casa di Dio. Clumsy fellow, I said to myself, you are going astray, you are endangering an appointment which was almost confirmed; you ought to have cut your speech short and thanked me effusively. Not a bit of it; he continued his homily with a ridiculous intrepidity; I had to think of a reply which would not be too unfavourable to young del Dongo; I found one, and by no means a bad one, as you shall judge for yourself. Monsignore, I said to him, Pius VII was a great Pope and a great saint: among all the Sovereigns, he alone dared to say No to the tyrant who saw Europe at his feet: very well, he was liable to enthusiasm,

which led him, when he was Bishop of Imola, to write that famous Pastoral of the Citizen–Cardinal Chiaramonti, in support of the Cisalpine Republic.

"'My poor Archbishop was left stupefied, and, to complete his stupefaction, I said to him with a very serious air: Good-bye, Monsignore, I shall take twenty-four hours to consider your proposal. The poor man added various supplications, by no means well expressed and distinctly inopportune after the word Good-bye had been uttered by me. Now, Conte Mosca della Rovere, I charge you to inform the Duchessa that I have no wish to delay for twenty-four hours a decision which may be agreeable to her; sit down there and write the Archbishop the letter of approval which will bring the whole matter to an end.' I wrote the letter, he signed it, and said to me: 'Take it, immediately, to the Duchessa.' Here, Signora, is the letter, and it is this that has given me an excuse for taking the pleasure of seeing you again this evening."

The Duchessa read the letter with rapture. While the Conte was telling his long story, Fabrizio had had time to collect himself: he shewed no sign of astonishment at the incident, he took the whole thing like a true nobleman who naturally has always supposed himself entitled to these extraordinary advancements, these strokes of fortune which would unhinge a plebeian mind; he spoke of his gratitude, but in polished terms, and ended by saying to the Conte:

"A good courtier ought to flatter the ruling passion; yesterday you expressed the fear that your workmen at Sanguigna might steal any fragments of ancient sculpture they brought to light; I am extremely fond of excavation, myself; with your kind permission, I will go to superintend the workmen. To-morrow evening, after suitably expressing my thanks at the Palace and to the Archbishop, I shall start for Sanguigna."

"But can you guess," the Duchessa asked the Conte, "what can have given rise to this sudden passion on our good Archbishop's part for Fabrizio?"

"I have no need to guess; the Grand Vicar whose nephew I made a captain said to me yesterday: 'Father Landriani starts from this absolute principle, that the titular is superior to the coadjutor, and is beside himself with joy at the prospect of having a del Dongo under his orders, and of having done him

a service.' Everything that can draw attention to Fabrizio's noble birth adds to his secret happiness: that he should have a man like that as his aide-decamp! In the second place, Monsignor Fabrizio has taken his fancy, he does not feel in the least shy before him; finally, he has been nourishing for the last ten years a very vigorous hatred of the Bishop of Piacenza, who openly boasts of his claim to succeed him in the see of Parma, and is moreover the son of a miller. It is with a view to this eventual succession that the Bishop of Piacenza has formed very close relations with the Marchesa Raversi, and now their intimacy is making the Archbishop tremble for the success of his favourite scheme, to have a del Dongo on his staff and to give him orders."

Two days after this, at an early hour in the morning, Fabrizio was directing the work of excavation at Sanguigna, opposite Colorno (which is the Versailles of the Princes of Parma); these excavations extended over the plain close to the high road which runs from Parma to the bridge of Casalmaggiore, the first town on Austrian territory. The workmen were intersecting the plain with a long trench, eight feet deep and as narrow as possible: they were engaged in seeking, along the old Roman Way, for the ruins of a second temple which, according to local reports, had still been in existence in the Middle Ages. Despite the Prince's orders, many of the contadini looked with misgivings on these long ditches running across their property. Whatever one might say to them, they imagined that a search was being made for treasure, and Fabrizio's presence was especially desirable with a view to preventing any little unrest. He was by no means bored, he followed the work with keen interest; from time to time they turned up some medal, and he saw to it that the workmen did not have time to arrange among themselves to make off with it.

The day was fine, the time about six o'clock in the morning: he had borrowed an old gun, single-barrelled; he shot several larks; one of them, wounded, was falling upon the high road. Fabrizio, as he went after it, caught sight, in the distance, of a carriage that was coming from Parma and making for the frontier at Casalmaggiore. He had just reloaded his gun when, the carriage which was extremely dilapidated coming towards him at a snail's pace, he recognised little Marietta; she had, on either side of her, the big bully Giletti and the old woman whom she passed off as her mother.

Giletti imagined that Fabrizio had posted himself there in the middle of the road, and with a gun in his hand, to insult him, and perhaps even to carry off his little Marietta. Like a man of valour, he jumped down from the carriage; he had in his left hand a large and very rusty pistol, and held in his right a sheathed sword, which he used when the limitations of the company obliged them to cast him for the part of some Marchese.

“Ha! Brigand!” he shouted, “I am very glad to find you here, a league from the frontier; I’ll settle your account for you, right away; you’re not protected here by your violet stockings.”

Fabrizio was engaged in smiling at little Marietta, and barely heeding the jealous shouts of Giletti, when suddenly he saw within three feet of his chest the muzzle of the rusty pistol; he was just in time to aim a blow at it, using his gun as a club: the pistol went off, but did not hit anyone.

“Stop, will you, you —— ,” cried Giletti to the vetturino; at the same time he was quick enough to spring to the muzzle of his adversary’s gun and to hold it so that it pointed away from his body; Fabrizio and he pulled at the gun, each with his whole strength. Giletti, who was a great deal the more vigorous of the two, placing one hand in front of the other, kept creeping forward towards the lock, and was on the point of snatching away the gun when Fabrizio, to prevent him from making use of it, fired. He had indeed seen, first, that the muzzle of the gun was more than three inches above Giletti’s shoulder: still, the detonation occurred close to the man’s ear. He was somewhat startled at first, but at once recovered himself:

“Oh, so you want to blow my head off, you scum! Just let me settle your reckoning.” Giletti flung away the scabbard of his Marchese’s sword, and fell upon Fabrizio with admirable swiftness. Our hero had no weapon, and gave himself up for lost.

He made for the carriage, which had stopped some ten yards beyond Giletti; he passed to the left of it, and, grasping the spring of the carriage in his hand, made a quick turn which brought him level with the door on the right-hand side, which stood open. Giletti, who had started off on his long legs and had not thought of checking himself by catching hold of the spring, went on for

several paces in the same direction before he could stop. As Fabrizio passed by the open door, he heard Marietta whisper to him:

“Take care of yourself; he will kill you. Here!”

As he spoke, Fabrizio saw fall from the door a sort of big hunting knife, he stooped to pick it up, but as he did so was wounded in the shoulder by a blow from Giletti’s sword. Fabrizio, on rising to his feet, found himself within six inches of Giletti, who struck him a furious blow in the face with the hilt of his sword; this blow was delivered with so much force that it completely took away Fabrizio’s senses. At that moment, he was on the point of being killed. Fortunately for him, Giletti was still too near to be able to give him a thrust with the point. Fabrizio, when he came to himself, took to flight, and ran as fast as his legs would carry him; as he ran, he flung away the sheath of the hunting knife, and then, turning smartly round, found himself three paces ahead of Giletti, who was in pursuit. Giletti rushed on, Fabrizio struck at him with the point of his knife; Giletti was in time to beat up the knife a little with his sword, but he received the point of the blade full in the left cheek. He passed close by Fabrizio, who felt his thigh pierced: it was Giletti’s knife, which he had found time to open. Fabrizio sprang to the right; he turned round, and at last the two adversaries found themselves at a proper fighting distance.

Giletti swore like a lost soul: “Ah! I shall slit your throat for you, you rascally priest,” he kept on repeating every moment. Fabrizio was quite out of breath and could not speak: the blow on his face from the sword-hilt was causing him a great deal of pain, and his nose was bleeding abundantly. He parried a number of strokes with his hunting knife, and made a number of passes without knowing quite what he was doing. He had a vague feeling that he was at a public display. This idea had been suggested to him by the presence of the workmen, who, to the number of twenty-five or thirty, formed a circle round the combatants, but at a most respectful distance; for at every moment they saw them start to run, and spring upon one another.

The fight seemed to be slackening a little; the strokes no longer followed one another with the same rapidity, when Fabrizio said to himself: “To judge by the pain which I feel in my face, he must have disfigured me.” In a spasm of rage at this idea, he leaped upon his enemy with the point of his hunting

knife forwards. This point entered Giletti's chest on the right side and passed out near his left shoulder; at the same moment Giletti's sword passed right to the hilt through the upper part of Fabrizio's arm, but the blade glided under the skin and the wound was not serious.

Giletti had fallen; as Fabrizio advanced towards him, looking down at his left hand which was clasping a knife, that hand opened mechanically and let the weapon slip to the ground.

"The rascal is dead," said Fabrizio to himself. He looked at Giletti's face: blood was pouring from his mouth. Fabrizio ran to the carriage.

"Have you a mirror?" he cried to Marietta. Marietta stared at him, deadly pale, and made no answer. The old woman with great coolness opened a green workbag and handed Fabrizio a little mirror with a handle, no bigger than his hand. Fabrizio as he looked at himself felt his face carefully: "My eyes are all right," he said to himself, "that is something, at any rate." He examined his teeth; they were not broken at all. "Then how is it that I am in such pain?" he asked himself, half aloud.

The old woman answered him:

"It is because the top of your cheek has been crushed between the hilt of Giletti's sword and the bone we keep there. Your cheek is horribly swollen and blue: put leeches on it instantly, and it will be all right."

"Ah! Leeches, instantly!" said Fabrizio with a laugh, and recovered all his coolness. He saw that the workmen had gathered round Giletti, and were gazing at him, without venturing to touch him.

"Look after that man there!" he called to them; "take his coat off." He was going to say more, but, on raising his eyes, saw five or six men at a distance of three hundred yards on the high road, who were advancing on foot and at a measured pace towards the scene of action.

"They are police," he thought, "and, as there has been a man killed, they will arrest me, and I shall have the honour of making a solemn entry into the city of Parma. What a story for the Raversi's friends at court who detest my aunt!"

Immediately, with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, he flung to the open-mouthed workmen all the money that he had in his pockets and leaped into the carriage.

“Stop the police from pursuing me!” he cried to his men, “and your fortunes are all made; tell them that I am innocent, that this man attacked me and wanted to kill me.

“And you,” he said to the vetturino, “make your horses gallop; you shall have four golden napoleons if you cross the Po before these people behind can overtake me.”

“Right you are,” said the man; “but there’s nothing to be afraid of: those men back there are on foot, and my little horses have only to trot to leave them properly in the lurch.” So saying, he put the animals into a gallop.

Our hero was shocked to hear the word “afraid” used by the driver: the fact being that really he had been extremely afraid after the blow from the sword-hilt which had struck him in the face.

“We may run into people on horseback coming towards us,” said the prudent vetturino, thinking of the four napoleons, “and the men who are following us may call out to them to stop us. . . . “ Which meant, in other words: “Reload your weapons.”

“Oh, how brave you are, my little Abate!” cried Marietta as she embraced Fabrizio. The old woman was looking out through the window of the carriage; presently she drew in her head.

“No one is following you, sir,” she said to Fabrizio with great coolness; “and there is no one on the road in front of you. You know how particular the officials of the Austrian police are: if they see you arrive like this at a gallop, along the embankment by the Po, they will arrest you, no doubt about it.”

Fabrizio looked out of the window.

“Trot,” he said to the driver. “What passport have you?” he asked the old woman.

“Three, instead of one,” she replied, “and they cost us four francs apiece; a dreadful thing, isn’t it, for poor dramatic artists who are kept travelling all the year round! Here is the passport of Signor Giletti, dramatic artist: that will be you; here are our two passports, Marietta’s and mine. But ‘ Giletti had all our money in his pocket; what is to become of us?”

“What had he?” Fabrizio asked.

“Forty good scudi of five francs,” said the old woman.

“You mean six, and some small change,” said Marietta With a smile: “I won’t have my little Abate cheated.”

“Isn’t it only natural, sir,” replied the old woman with great coolness, “that I should try to tap you for thirty-four scudi? What are thirty-four scudi to you, and we — we have lost our protector. Who is there now to find us lodgings, to beat down prices with the vetturini when we are on the road, and to put the fear of God into everyone? Giletti was not beautiful, but he was most useful; and if the little girl there hadn’t been a fool, and fallen in love with you from the first, Giletti would never have noticed anything, and you would have given us good money. I can assure you that we are very poor.”

Fabrizio was touched; he took out his purse and gave several napoleons to the old woman.

“You see,” he said to her, “I have only fifteen left, so it is no use your trying to pull my leg any more.”

Little Marietta flung her arms round his neck, and the old woman kissed his hands. The carriage was moving all this time at a slow trot. When they saw in the distance the yellow barriers striped with black which indicated the beginning of Austrian territory, the old woman said to Fabrizio:

“You would do best to cross the frontier on foot with Giletti’s passport in your pocket; as for us, we shall stop for a minute, on the excuse of making ourselves tidy. And besides, the dogana will want to look at our things. If you will take my advice, you will go through Casalmaggiore at a careless stroll; even go into the caffè and drink a glass of brandy, once you are past the village, put your best foot foremost. The police are as sharp as the devil

in an Austrian country; they will pretty soon know there has been a man killed; you are travelling with a passport which is not yours, that is more than enough to get you two years in prison. Make for the Po on your right after you leave the town, hire a boat and get away to Ravenna or Ferrara; get clear of the Austrian States as quickly as ever you can. With a couple of louis you should be able to buy another passport from some doganiere; it would be fatal to use this one; don't forget that you have killed the man."

As he approached, on foot, the bridge of boats at Casalmaggiore, Fabrizio carefully reread Giletti's passport. Our hero was in great fear, he recalled vividly all that Conte Mosca had said to him about the danger involved in his entering Austrian territory; well, two hundred yards ahead of him he saw the terrible bridge which was about to give him access to that country, the capital of which, in his eyes, was the Spielberg. But what else was he to do? The Duchy of Modena, which marches with the State of Parma on the South, returned its fugitives in compliance with a special convention; the frontier of the State which extends over the mountains in the direction of Genoa was too far off; his misadventure would be known at Parma long before he could reach those mountains; there remained therefore nothing but the Austrian States on the left bank of the Po. Before there was time to write to the Austrian authorities asking them to arrest him, thirty-six hours, or even two days must elapse. All these considerations duly weighed, Fabrizio set a light with his cigar to his own passport; it was better for him, on Austrian soil, to be a vagabond than to be Fabrizio del Dongo, and it was possible that they might search him.

Quite apart from the very natural repugnance which he felt towards entrusting his life to the passport of the unfortunate Giletti, this document presented material difficulties. Fabrizio's height was, at the most, five feet five inches, and not five feet ten inches as was stated on the passport. He was not quite twenty-four, and looked younger. Giletti had been thirty-nine. We must confess that our hero paced for a good half-hour along a flood-barrier of the Po near the bridge of boats before making up his mind to go down on to it. "What should I advise anyone else to do in my place?" he asked himself finally. "Obviously, to cross: there is danger in remaining in the State of Parma; a constable may be sent in pursuit of the man who has killed another man, even in self-defence." Fabrizio went through his pocket, tore up all his papers, and kept literally nothing but his handkerchief and his

cigar-case; it was important for him to curtail the examination which he would have to undergo. He thought of a terrible objection which might be raised, and to which he could find no satisfactory answer: he was going to say that his name was Giletti, and all his linen was marked F. D.

As we have seen, Fabrizio was one of those unfortunates who are tormented by their imagination; it is a characteristic fault of men of intelligence in Italy. A French soldier of equal or even inferior courage would have gone straight to the bridge and have crossed it without more ado, without thinking beforehand of any possible difficulties; but also he would have carried with him all his coolness, and Fabrizio was far from feeling cool when, at the end of the bridge, a little man, dressed in grey, said to him: “Go into the police office and shew your passport.”

This office had dirty walls studded with nails from which hung the pipes and the soiled hats of the officials. The big deal table behind which they were installed was spotted all over with stains of ink and wine; two or three fat registers bound in raw hide bore stains of all colours, and the margins of the pages were black with finger-marks. On top of the registers which were piled one on another lay three magnificent wreaths of laurel which had done duty a couple of days before for one of the Emperor’s festivals.

Fabrizio was impressed by all these details; they gave him a tightening of the heart; this was the price he must pay for the magnificent luxury, so cool and clean, that caught the eye in his charming rooms in the palazzo Sanseverina. He was obliged to enter this dirty office and to appear there as an inferior; he was about to undergo an examination.

The official who stretched out a yellow hand to take his passport was small and dark. He wore a brass pin in his necktie. “This is an ill-tempered fellow,” thought Fabrizio. The gentleman seemed excessively surprised as he read the passport, and his perusal of it lasted fully five minutes.

“You have met with an accident,” he said to the stranger, looking at his cheek.

“The vetturino flung us out over the embankment.”

Then the silence was resumed, and the official cast sour glances at the traveller.

“I see it now,” Fabrizio said to himself, “he is going to inform me that he is sorry to have bad news to give me, and that I am under arrest.” All sorts of wild ideas surged simultaneously into our hero’s brain, which at this moment was not very logical. For instance, he thought of escaping by a door in the office which stood open. “I get rid of my coat, I jump into the Po, and no doubt I shall be able to swim across it. Anything is better than the Spielberg.” The police official was staring fixedly at him, while he calculated the chances of success of this dash for safety; they furnished two interesting types of the human countenance. The presence of danger gives a touch of genius to the reasoning man, places him, so to speak, above his own level: in the imaginative man it inspires romances, bold, it is true, but frequently absurd.

You ought to have seen the indignant air of our hero under the searching eye of this police official, adorned with his brass jewelry. “If I were to kill him,” thought Fabrizio, “I should be convicted of murder and sentenced to twenty years in the galleys, or to death, which is a great deal less terrible than the Spielberg with a chain weighing a hundred and twenty pounds on each foot and nothing but eight ounces of bread to live on; and that lasts for twenty years; so that I should not get out until I was forty-four.” Fabrizio’s logic overlooked the fact that, as he had burned his own passport, there was nothing to indicate to the police official that he was the rebel, Fabrizio del Dongo.

Our hero was sufficiently alarmed, as we have seen; he would have been a great deal more so could he have read the thoughts that were disturbing the official’s mind. This man was a friend of Giletti; one may judge of his surprise when he saw his friend’s passport in the hands of a stranger; his first impulse was to have that stranger arrested, then he reflected that Giletti might easily have sold his passport to this fine young man who apparently had just been doing something disgraceful at Parma. “If I arrest him,” he said to himself, “Giletti will get into trouble; they will at once discover that he has sold his passport; on the other hand, what will my chiefs say if it is proved that I, a friend of Giletti, put a visa on his passport when it was carried by someone else.” The official got up with a yawn and said to

Fabrizio: “Wait a minute, sir”; then, adopting a professional formula, added: “A difficulty has arisen.” On which Fabrizio murmured: “What is going to arise is my escape.”

As a matter of fact, the official went out of the office, leaving the door open; and the passport was left lying on the deal table. “The danger is obvious,” thought Fabrizio; “I shall take my passport and walk slowly back across the bridge; I shall tell the constable, if he questions me, that I forgot to have my passport examined by the commissary of police in the last village in the State of Parma.” Fabrizio had already taken the passport in his hand when, to his unspeakable astonishment, he heard the clerk with the brass jewelry say:

“Upon my soul, I can’t do any more work; the heat is stifling; I am going to the caffè to have half a glass. Go into the office when you have finished your pipe, there’s a passport to be stamped; the party is in there.”

Fabrizio, who was stealing out on tiptoe, found himself face to face with a handsome young man who was saying to himself, or rather humming: “Well, let us see this passport; I’ll put my scrawl on it.

“Where does the gentleman wish to go?”

“To Mantua, Venice and Ferrara.”

“Ferrara it is,” said the official, whistling; he took up a die, stamped the visa in blue ink on the passport, rapidly wrote in the words: “Mantua, Venice and Ferrara,” in the space left blank by the stamp, then waved his hand several times in the air, signed, and dipped his pen in the ink to make his flourish, which he executed slowly and with infinite pains. Fabrizio followed every movement of his pen; the clerk studied his flourish with satisfaction, adding five or six finishing touches, then handed the passport back to Fabrizio, saying in a careless tone: “A good journey, sir!”

Fabrizio made off at a pace the alacrity of which he was endeavouring to conceal, when he felt himself caught by the left arm: instinctively his hand went to the hilt of his dagger, and if he had not observed that he was surrounded by houses he might perhaps have done something rash. The man

who was touching his left arm, seeing that he appeared quite startled, said by way of apology:

“But I called the gentleman three times, and got no answer; has the gentleman anything to declare before the customs?”

“I have nothing on me but my handkerchief; I am going to a place quite near here, to shoot with one of my family.”

He would have been greatly embarrassed had he been asked to name this relative. What with the great heat and his various emotions, Fabrizio was as wet as if he had fallen into the Po. “I am not lacking in courage to face actors, but clerks with brass jewelry send me out of my mind; I shall make a humorous sonnet out of that to amuse the Duchessa.”

Entering Casalmaggiore, Fabrizio at once turned to the right along a mean street which leads down to the Po. “I am in great need,” he said to himself, “of the succour of Bacchus and Ceres,” and he entered a shop outside which there hung a grey clout fastened to a stick; on the clout was inscribed the word Trattoria. A meagre piece of bed-linen supported on two slender wooden hoops and hanging down to within three feet of the ground sheltered the doorway of the Trattoria from the vertical rays of the sun. There, a half-undressed and extremely pretty woman received our hero with respect, which gave him the keenest pleasure; he hastened to inform her that he was dying of hunger. While the woman was preparing his breakfast, there entered a man of about thirty; he had given no greeting on coming in; suddenly he rose from the bench on which he had flung himself down with a familiar air, and said to Fabrizio: “Eccellenza, la riverisco!” (Excellency, your servant!) Fabrizio was in the highest spirits at the moment, and, instead of forming sinister plans, replied with a laugh: “And how the devil do you know my Excellency?”

“What! Doesn’t Your Excellency remember Lodovico, one of the Signora Duchessa Sanseverina’s coachmen? At Sacca, the place in the country where we used to go every year, I always took fever; I asked the Signora for a pension, and retired from service. Now I am rich; instead of the pension of twelve scudi a year, which was the most I was entitled to expect, the Signora told me that, to give me the leisure to compose sonnets, for I am a poet in the

lingua volgare, she would allow me twenty-four scudi and the Signor Conte told me that if ever I was in difficulties I had only to come and tell him. I have had the honour to drive Monsignore for a stage, when he went to make his retreat, like a good Christian, in the Certosa of Velleja."

Fabrizio studied the man's face and began to recognise him. He had been one of the smartest coachmen in the Sanseverina establishment; now that he was what he called rich his entire clothing consisted of a coarse shirt, in holes, and a pair of cloth breeches, dyed black at some time in he past, which barely came down to his knees; a pair of shoes and a villainous hat completed his equipment. In addition to this, he had not shaved for a fortnight. As he ate his omelette Fabrizio engaged in conversation with him, absolutely as between equals; he thought he detected that Lodovico was in love with their hostess. He finished his meal rapidly, then said in a low voice to Lodovico: "I want a word with you."

"Your Excellency can speak openly before her, she is a really good woman," said Lodovico with a tender air.

"Very well, my friends," said Fabrizio without hesitation, "I am in trouble, and have need of your help. First of all, there is nothing political about my case; I have simply and solely killed a man who wanted to murder me because I spoke to his mistress."

"Poor young man!" said the landlady.

"Your Excellency can count on me!" cried the coachman, his eyes ablaze with the most passionate devotion; "where does His Excellency wish to go?"

"To Ferrara. I have a passport, but I should prefer not to speak to the police, who may have received information of what has happened."

"When did you despatch this fellow?"

"This morning, at six o'clock."

"Your Excellency has no blood on his clothes, has he," asked the landlady.

“I was thinking of that,” put in the coachman, “and besides, the cloth of that coat is too fine; you don’t see many like that in the country round here, it would make — people stare at us; I shall go and buy some clothes from the Jew. Your Excellency is about my figure, only thinner.”

“For pity’s sake, don’t go on calling me Excellency, it may attract attention.”

“Very good, Excellency,” replied the coachman, as he left the tavern.

“Here, here,” Fabrizio called after him, “and what about the money! Come back!”

“What do you mean — money!” said the landlady; “he has sixty-seven scudi which are entirely at your service. I myself,” she went on, lowering her voice, “have forty scudi which I offer you with the best will in the world; one doesn’t always have money on one when these accidents happen.”

On account of the heat, Fabrizio had taken off his coat on entering the Trattoria.

“You have a waistcoat on you which might land us in trouble if anyone came in: that fine English cloth would attract attention.” She gave our fugitive a stuff waistcoat, dyed black, which belonged to her husband. A tall young man came into the tavern by an inner door; he was dressed with a certain style.

“This is my husband,” said the landlady. “Pietro–Antonio,” she said to her husband, “this gentleman is a friend of Ludovico; he met with an accident this morning, across the river, and he wants to get away to Ferrara.”

“Oh, we’ll get him there,” said the husband with an air of great gentility; “we have Carlo–Giuseppe’s boat.”

Owing to another weakness in our hero which we shall confess as naturally as we have related his fear in the police office at the end of the bridge, there were tears in his eyes; he was profoundly moved by the perfect devotion which he found among these contadini; he thought also of this characteristic generosity of his aunt; he would have liked to be able to make these people’s fortune. Lodovico returned, carrying a packet.

“So that’s finished,” the husband said to him in a friendly tone.

“It’s not that,” replied Lodovico in evident alarm, “people are beginning to talk about you, they noticed that you hesitated before turning down our vicolo and leaving the big street, like a man who was trying to hide.”

“Go up quick to the bedroom,” said the husband.

This room, which was very large and fine, had grey cloth instead of glass in its two windows; it contained four beds, each six feet wide and five feet high.

“Be quick! Be quick!” said Lodovico, “there is a swaggering fool of a constable who has just been posted here and began trying to make love to the pretty lady downstairs; and I’ve told him that when he goes travelling about the country he may find himself stopping a bullet. If the dog hears any mention of Your Excellency, he’ll want to do us a bad turn, he will try to arrest you here, so as to get Teodolinda’s Trattoria a bad name.

“What’s this?” Lodovico went on, seeing Fabrizio’s shirt all stained with blood and his wounds bandaged with handkerchiefs, “so the porco shewed fight, did he? That’s a hundred times more that you need to get yourself arrested, and I haven’t bought you any shirt.” Without ceremony he opened the husband’s wardrobe and gave one of his shirts to Fabrizio, who was soon attired like a prosperous countryman. Lodovico took down a net that was hanging on the wall, placed Fabrizio’s clothes in the basket in which the fish are put, went downstairs at a run and hastened out of the house by a back door; Fabrizio followed him.

“Teodolinda,” he called out as he passed by the bar, “hide . what I’ve left upstairs, we are going to wait among the willows, and you, Pietro–Antonio, send us a boat quickly, we’ll pay well for it.”

Lodovico led Fabrizio across more than a score of ditches. There were planks, very long and very elastic, which served as bridges across the wider of these ditches; Lodovico took up these planks after crossing by them. On coming to the last canal he took up the plank with haste. “Now we can stop and breathe,” he said; “that dog of a constable will have to go two leagues

and more to reach Your Excellency. Why, you're quite pale," he said to Fabrizio; "I haven't forgotten the little bottle of brandy."

"It comes in most useful; the wound in my thigh is beginning to hurt me; and besides, I was in a fine fright in the police office by the bridge."

"I can well believe it," said Lodovico; "with a shirt covered in blood, as yours was, I can't conceive how you ever even dared to set foot in such a place. As for your wounds, I know what to do; I am going to put you in a cool place where you can sleep for an hour; the boat will come for us there, if there is any way of getting a boat; if not, when you have rested a little, we shall go on two short leagues, and I shall take you to a mill where I shall take a boat myself. Your Excellency knows far more than I do: the Signora will be in despair when she hears of the accident; they will tell her that you are mortally wounded, perhaps even that you killed the other man by foul play. The Marchesa Raversi will not fail to circulate all the evil reports that can hurt the Signora. Your Excellency might write." "And how should I get the letter delivered?" "The boys at the mill where we are going earn twelve soldi a day; in a day and a half they can be at Parma; say four francs for the journey, two francs for the wear and tear of their shoe-leather: if the errand was being done for a poor man like me, that would be six francs; as it is in the service of a Signore, I shall give them twelve."

When they had reached the resting-place in a clump of alders and willows, very leafy and very cool, Lodovico went to a house more than an hour's journey away in search of ink and paper. "Great heavens, how comfortable I am here," cried Fabrizio. "Fortune, farewell! I shall never be an Archbishop!"

On his return, Lodovico found him fast asleep and did not like to arouse him. The boat did not arrive until the sun had almost set; as soon as Lodovico saw it appear in the distance he called Fabrizio, who wrote a couple of letters.

"Your Excellency knows far more than I do," said Lodovico with a troubled air, "and I am very much afraid of displeasing him seriously, whatever he may say, if I add a certain remark."

“I am not such a fool as you think me,” replied Fabrizio, “and, whatever you may say, you will always be in my eyes a faithful servant of my aunt, and a man who has done everything in the world to get me out of a very awkward scrape.”

Many more protestations still were required before Lodovico could be prevailed upon to speak, and when at last he had made up his mind, he began with a preamble which lasted for quite five minutes. Fabrizio grew impatient, then said to himself: “After all, whose fault is it? It is due to our vanity, which this man has very well observed from his seat on the box.” Lodovico’s devotion at last impelled him to run the risk of speaking plainly.

“What would not the Marchesa Raversi give to the messenger you are going to send to Parma to have these two letters? They are in your handwriting, and consequently furnish legal evidence against you. Your Excellency will take me for an inquisitive and indiscreet fellow; in the second place, he will perhaps feel ashamed of setting before the eyes of the Signora Duchessa the wretched handwriting of a coachman like myself; but after all, the thought of your safety opens my mouth, although you may think me impertinent. Could not Your Excellency dictate those two letters to me? Then I am the only person compromised, and that very little; I can say, at a pinch, that you appeared to me in the middle of a field with an inkhorn in one hand and a pistol in the other, and that you ordered me to write.”

“Give me your hand, my dear Ludovico?’ cried Fabrizio, “and to prove to you that I wish to have no secret from a friend like yourself, copy these two letters jest as they are.” Lodovico fully appreciated this mark of confidence, and was extremely grateful for it, but after writing a few lines, as he saw the boat coming rapidly downstream:

“The letters will be finished sooner,” he said to Fabrizio, “if Your Excellency will take the trouble to dictate them to me.” The letters written, Fabrizio wrote an A and a B on the closing lines, and on a little scrap of paper which he afterwards crumpled up, put in French: “Croyez A et B.” The messenger would be told to hide this scrap of paper in his clothing.

The boat having come within hailing distance, Lodovico called to the boatmen by names which were not theirs; they made no reply, and put into

the bank a thousand yards lower down, looking all round them to make sure that they had not been seen by some doganiere.

“I am at your orders,” said Lodovico to Fabrizio; “would you like me to take these letters myself to Parma? Or would you prefer me to accompany you to Ferrara?”

“To accompany me to Ferrara is a service which I was hardly daring to ask of you. I shall have to land, and try to enter the town without shewing my passport. I may tell you that I feel the greatest repugnance towards travelling under the name of Giletti, and I can think of no one but yourself who would be able to buy me another passport.”

“Why didn’t you speak at Casalmaggiore? I know a spy there who would have sold me an excellent passport, and not dear, for forty or fifty francs.”

One of the two boatmen, whose home was on the right bank of the Po, and who consequently had no need of a foreign passport to go to Parma, undertook to deliver the letters. Lodovico, who knew how to handle the oars, set to work to propel the boat with the other man.

“We shall find on the lower reaches of the Po,” he said, “several armed vessels belonging to the police, and I shall manage to avoid them.” Ten times at least they were obliged to hide among little islets flush with the water, covered with willows. Three times they set foot on shore in order to let the boat drift past the police vessels empty. Lodovico took advantage of these long intervals of leisure to recite to Fabrizio several of his sonnets. The sentiments were true enough, but were so to speak blunted by his expression of them, and were not worth the trouble of putting them on paper; the curious thing was that this ex-coachman had passions and points of view that were vivid and picturesque; he became cold and commonplace as soon as he began to write. “It is the opposite of what we see in society,” thought Fabrizio; “people know nowadays how to express everything gracefully, but their hearts have nothing to say.” He realised that the greatest pleasure he could give to this faithful servant would be to correct the mistakes in spelling in his sonnets.

“They laugh at me when I lend them my copy-book,” said Lodovico; “but if Your Excellency would deign to dictate to me the spelling of the words letter by letter, the envious fellows wouldn’t have anything left to say: spelling doesn’t make genius.” It was not until the third night of his journey that Fabrizio was able to land in complete safety in a thicket of alders, a league above Pontelagoscuro. All the next day he remained hidden in a hempfield, while Lodovico went ahead to Ferrara; he there took some humble lodgings in the house of a poor Jew, who at once realised that there was money to be earned if one knew how to keep one’s mouth shut. That evening, as the light began to fail, Fabrizio entered Ferrara riding upon a pony; he had every need of this support, for he had been touched by the sun on the river; the knife-wound that he had in his thigh, and the sword-thrust that Giletti had given him in the shoulder, at the beginning of their duel, were inflamed and had brought on a fever.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Jew, the owner of the bouse, had procured a discreet surgeon, who, realising in his turn that there was money in the case, informed Lodovico that his conscience obliged him to make his report to the police on the injuries of the young man whom he, Lodovico, called his brother. “The law is clear on the subject,” he added; “it is evident that your brother cannot possibly have injured himself, as he says, by falling from a ladder while he was holding an open knife in his hand.”

Lodovico replied coldly to this honest surgeon that, if he should decide to yield to the inspirations of his conscience, he, Lodovico, would have the honour, before leaving Ferrara, of falling upon him in precisely the same way, with an open knife in his hand. When he reported this incident to Fabrizio, the latter blamed him strongly, but there was not a moment to be lost; they must fly. Lodovico told the Jew that he wished to try the effect of a little fresh air on his brother; he went to fetch a carriage, and our friends left the house never to return. The reader is no doubt finding these accounts of all the manoeuvres that the absence of a passport renders necessary extremely wearisome; this sort of anxiety does not exist in France; but in Italy, and especially in the neighbourhood of the Po, people talk about passports all day long. Once they had left Ferrara without hindrance, as though they were taking a drive, Lodovico sent the carriage back, then re-entered the town by another gate and returned to pick up Fabrizio with a sediola which he had hired to take them a dozen leagues. Coming near Bologna, our friends had themselves taken through the fields to the road which leads from Florence to Bologna; they spent the night in the most wretched inn they could find, and on the following day, Fabrizio feeling strong enough to walk a little, they entered Bologna like ordinary pedestrians. They had burned Giletti’s passport; the comedian’s death must by now be common knowledge, and there was less danger in being arrested as people without passports than as bearing the passport of a man who had been killed.

Lodovico knew at Bologna two or three servants in great houses; it was decided that he should go to the them and find out how the land lay. He explained to them that, while he was on his way from Florence, travelling with his younger brother, the latter, wanting to sleep, had let him come on by himself an hour before sunrise. He was to have joined him in the village where he, Lodovico, would stop to escape the midday heat. But Lodovico, seeing no sign of his brother, had decided to retrace his steps; he had found his brother injured by a blow from a stone and with several knife-wounds, and, in addition, robbed by some men who had picked a quarrel with him. This brother was a good-looking boy, knew how to groom and drive horses, read and write, and was anxious to find a place with some good family. Lodovico reserved for use on a future occasion the detail that, when Fabrizio was on the ground, the robbers had fled, taking with them the little bag in which the brothers had put their linen and their passports.

On arriving in Bologna, Fabrizio, feeling extremely tired and not venturing, without a passport, to shew his face at an inn, had gone into the huge church of San Petronio. He found there a delicious coolness; presently he felt quite revived. “Ungrateful wretch that I am,” he said to himself suddenly, “I go into a church, simply to sit down, as it might be in a caffè’.” He threw himself on his knees and thanked God effusively for the evident protection with which he had been surrounded ever since he had had the misfortune to kill Giletti. The danger which still made him shudder had been that of his being recognised in the police office at Casalmaggiore. “How,” he asked himself, “did that clerk, whose eyes were so full of suspicion, who read my passport through at least three times, fail to notice that I am not five feet ten inches tall, that I am not thirty-nine years old, and that I am not strongly pitted by small-pox? What thanks I owe to Thee, O my God! And I have actually refrained until this moment from casting the nonentity that I am at Thy feet. My pride has chosen to believe that it was to a vain human prudence that I owed the good fortune of escaping the Spielberg, which was already opening to engulf me.”

Fabrizio spent more than an hour in this state of extreme emotion, in the presence of the immense bounty of God. Lodovico approached, without his hearing him, and took his stand opposite him. Fabrizio, who had buried his face in, his hands, raised his head, and his faithful servant could see the tears streaming down his cheeks.

“Come back in an hour,” Fabrizio ordered him, somewhat harshly.

Lodovico forgave this tone in view of the speaker’s piety. Fabrizio repeated several times the Seven Penitential Psalms, which he knew by heart; he stopped for a long time at the verses which had a bearing on his situation at the moment.

Fabrizio asked pardon of God for many things, but what is really remarkable is that it never entered his head to number among his faults the plan of becoming Archbishop simply because Conte Mosca was Prime Minister and felt that office and all the importance it implied to be suitable for the Duchessa’s nephew. He had desired it without passion, it is true, but still he had thought of it, exactly as one might think of being made a Minister or a General. It had never entered his thoughts that his conscience might be concerned in this project of the Duchessa. This is a remarkable characteristic of the religion which he owed to the instruction given him by the Jesuits of Milan. That religion deprives one of the courage to think of unfamiliar things, and especially forbids personal examination, as the most enormous of sins; it is a step towards Protestantism. To find out of what sins one is guilty, one must question one’s priest, or read the list of sins, as it is to be found printed in the books entitled, Preparation for the Sacrament of Penance. Fabrizio knew by heart the list of sins, rendered into the Latin tongue, which he had learned at the Ecclesiastical Academy of Naples. So, when going through that list, on coming to the article, Murder, he had most forcibly accused himself before God of having killed a man, but in defence of his own life. He had passed rapidly, and without paying them the slightest attention, over the various articles relating to the sin of Simony (the procuring of ecclesiastical dignities with money). If anyone had suggested to him that he should pay a hundred louis to become First Grand Vicar of the Archbishop of Parma, he would have rejected such an idea with horror; but, albeit he was not wanting in intelligence, nor above all in logic, it never once occurred to his mind that the employment on his behalf of Conte Mosca’s influence was a form of Simony. This is where the Jesuitical education triumphs: it forms the habit of not paying attention to things that are clearer than daylight. A Frenchman, brought up among conflicting personal interests and in the prevailing irony of Paris, might, without being deliberately unfair, have accused Fabrizio of hypocrisy at the very moment when our hero was

opening his soul to God with the utmost sincerity and the most profound emotion.

Fabrizio did not leave the church until he had prepared the confession which he proposed to make the next day. He found Lodovico sitting on the steps of the vast stone peristyle which rises above the great piazza opposite the front of San Petronio. As after a storm the air becomes more pure, so now Fabrizio's soul was tranquil and happy and so to speak refreshed.

"I feel quite well now, I hardly notice my wounds," he said to Lodovico as he approached him; "but first of all I have to apologise to you; I answered you crossly when you came and spoke to me in the church; I was examining my conscience. Well, how are things going?"

"Excellently: I have taken lodgings, to tell the truth not at all worthy of Your Excellency, with the wife of one of my friends, who is a very pretty woman and, better still, on the best of terms with one of the heads of the police. To-morrow I shall go to declare how our passports came to be stolen; my declaration will be taken in good part; but I shall pay the carriage of the letter which the police will write to Casalmaggiore, to find out whether there exists in that comune a certain San Micheli, Lodovico, who has a brother, named Fabrizio, in service with the Signora Duchessa Sanseverina at Parma. All is settled, siamo a cavallo." (An Italian proverb meaning: "We are saved.")

Fabrizio had suddenly assumed a most serious air: he begged Lodovico to wait a moment, almost ran back into the church, and when barely past the door flung himself down on his knees; he humbly kissed the stone slabs of the floor. "It is a miracle, Lord," he cried with tears in his eyes: "when Thou sawest my soul disposed to return to the path of duty, Thou hast saved me. Great God! It is possible that one day I may be killed in some quarrel; in the hour of my death remember the state in which my soul is now." It was with transports of the keenest joy that Fabrizio recited afresh the Seven Penitential Psalms. Before leaving the building he went up to an old woman who was seated before a great Madonna and by the side of an iron triangle rising vertically from a stand on the same metal. The sides of this triangle bristled with a large number of spikes intended to support the little candles which the piety of the faithful keeps burning before the famous Madonna of

Cimabue. Seven candles only were lighted when Fabrizio approached the stand; he registered this fact in his memory, with the intention of meditating upon it later on when he had more leisure.

“What do the candles cost?” he asked the woman.

“Two bajocchi each.”

As a matter of fact they were scarcely thicker than quills and were not a foot in length.

“How many candles can still go on your triangle?”

“Sixty-three, since there are seven alight.”

“Ah!” thought Fabrizio, “sixty-three and seven make seventy; that also is to be borne in mind.” He paid for the candles, placed the first seven in position himself, and lighted them, then fell on his knees to make his oblation, and said to the old woman as he rose:

“It is for grace received.”

“I am dying of hunger,” he said to Ludovico as he joined him outside.

“Don’t let us go to an osteria, let us go to our lodgings; the woman of the house will go out and buy you everything you want for your meal; she will rob you of a score of soldi, and will be all the more attached to the newcomer in consequence.”

“All this means simply that I shall have to go on dying of hunger for a good hour longer,” said Fabrizio, laughing with the serenity of a child; and he entered an osteria close to San Petronio. To his extreme suprise, he saw at a table near the one at which he had taken his seat, Peppe, his aunt’s first footman, the same who on a former occasion had come to meet him at Geneva. Fabrizio made a sign to him to say nothing; then, having made a hasty meal, a smile of happiness hovering over his lips, he rose; Peppe followed him, and, for the third time, our hero entered the church of San Petronio. Out of discretion, Ludovico remained outside, strolling in the piazza.

“Oh, Lord, Monsignore! How are your wounds? The Signora Duchessa is terribly upset: for a whole day she thought you were dead, and had been left lying on some island in the Po; I must go and send off a messenger to her this very instant. I have been looking for you for the last six days; I spent three at Ferrara, searching all the inns.”

“Have you a passport for me?”

“I have three different ones: one with Your Excellency’s names and titles, a second with your name only, and the other in a false name, Giuseppe Bossi; each passport is made out in duplicate, according to whether Your Excellency prefers to have come from Florence or from Modena. You have only to go for a turn outside the town. The Signor Conte would be glad if you would lodge at the Albergo del Pellegrino; the landlord is a friend of his.”

Fabrizio, with the air of a casual visitor, advanced along the right aisle of the church to the place where his candles were burning; he fastened his eyes on Cimabue’s Madonna, then said to Peppe as he fell on his knees: “I must just give thanks for a moment.” Peppe followed his example. When they left the church, Peppe noticed that Fabrizio gave a twenty-franc piece to the first pauper who asked him for alms: this mendicant uttered cries of gratitude which drew into the wake of the charitable stranger the swarms of paupers of every kind who generally adorn the Piazza San Petronio. All of them were anxious to have a share in the napoleon. The women, despairing of making their way through the crowd that surrounded him, flung themselves on Fabrizio, shouting to him to know whether it was not the fact that he had intended to give his napoleon to be divided among all the poveri del buon Dio. Peppe, brandishing his gold-headed cane, ordered them to leave His Excellency alone.

“Oh! Excellency!” all the women proceeded to cry in still more piercing accents, “give another gold napoleon for the poor women!” Fabrizio increased his pace, the women followed him, screaming, and a number of male paupers, running in from every street, created a sort of tumult. All this crowd, horribly dirty and energetic, cried out: “Eccellenza!” Fabrizio had great difficulty in escaping from the rabble; the scene brought his

imagination back to earth. “I have got only what I deserve,” he said to himself; “I have rubbed shoulders with the mob.”

Two women followed him as far as the Porta Saragozza, by which he left the town: Peppe stopped them by threatening them seriously with his cane and flinging them some small change; Fabrizio climbed the charming hill of San Michele in Bosco, made a partial circuit of the town outside the walls, took a path which brought him in five hundred yards to the Florence road, then re-entered Bologna and gravely handed to the police official a passport in which his description was given in the fullest detail. This passport gave him the name of Giuseppe Bossi, student of theology. Fabrizio noticed a little spot of red ink dropped, as though by accident, at the foot of the sheet, near the right-hand corner. A couple of hours later he had a spy on his heels, on account of the title of Eccellenza which his companion had given him in front of the beggars of San Petronio, although his passport bore none of the titles which give a man the right to make his servants address him as Excellency.

Fabrizio saw the spy and made light of him; he gave no more thought either to passports or to police, and amused himself with everything, like a boy. Peppe, who had orders to stay beside him, seeing that he was more than satisfied with Lodovico, preferred to go back in person to convey these good tidings to the Duchessa. Fabrizio wrote two very long letters to his dear friends; then it occurred to him to write a third to the venerable Archbishop Laadriani. This letter produced a marvellous effect; it contained a very exact account of the affair with Giletti. The good Archbishop, deeply moved, did not fail to go and read this letter to the Prince, who was quite ready to listen to it, being somewhat curious to know what line this young Monsignore took to excuse so shocking a murder. Thanks to the many friends of the Marchesa Raversi, the Prince, as well as the whole city of Parma, believed that Fabrizio had procured the assistance of twenty or thirty peasants to overpower a bad actor who had had the insolence to challenge him for the favours of little Marietta. In despotic courts, the first skilful intriguer controls the Truth, as the fashion controls it in Paris.

“But, what in the devil’s name!” exclaimed the Prince to the Archbishop; “one gets things of that sort done for one by somebody else; but to do them

oneself is not the custom; besides, one doesn't kill a comedian like Giletti, one buys him."

Fabrizio had not the slightest suspicion of what was going on at Parma. As a matter of fact, the question there was whether the death of this comedian, who in his lifetime had earned a monthly salary of thirty-two francs, was not going to bring about the fall of the Ultra Ministry, and of its leader, Conte Mosca.

On learning of the death of Giletti, the Prince, stung by the independent airs which the Duchessa was giving herself, had ordered the Fiscal General Rassi to treat the whole case as though the person charged were a Liberal. Fabrizio, for his part, thought that a man of his rank was superior to the laws; he did not take into account that in countries where bearers of great names are never punished, intrigue can do anything, even against them. He often spoke to Lodovico of his perfect innocence, which would very soon be proclaimed; his great argument being that he was not guilty. Whereupon Lodovico said to him: "I cannot conceive how Your Excellency, who has so much intelligence and education, can take the trouble to say all that before me who am his devoted servant; Your Excellency adopts too many precautions; that sort of thing is all right to say in public, or before a court." "This man believes me to be a murderer, and loves me none the less for it," thought Fabrizio, falling from the clouds.

Three days after Peppe's departure, he was greatly astonished to receive an enormous letter, sealed with a plait of silk, as in the days of Louis XIV, and addressed a Sua Eccellenza reverendissima monsignor Fabrizio del Dongo, primo gran vicario della diocesi di Parma, canonico, etc.

"Why, am I still all that?" he asked himself with a laugh. Archbishop Landriani's letter was a masterpiece of logic and lucidity; it filled nevertheless nineteen large pages, and gave an extremely good account of all that had occurred in Parma on the occasion of the death of Giletti.

"A French army commanded by Marshal Ney, and marching upon the town, would not have had a greater effect," the good Archbishop informed him; "with the exception of the Duchessa and myself, my dearly beloved son, everyone believes that you gave yourself the pleasure of killing the histrion

Giletti. Had this misfortune befallen you, it is one of those things which one hushes up with two hundred louis and six months' absence abroad; but the Marchesa Raversi is seeking to overthrow Conte Mosca with the help of this incident. It is not at all with the dreadful sin of murder that the public blames you, it is solely with the clumsiness, or rather the insolence of not having condescended to have recourse to a bulo" (a sort of hired assassin). "I give you a summary here in clear terms of the things that I hear said all around me, for since this ever deplorable misfortune, I go every day to three of the principal houses in the town to have an opportunity of justifying you. And never have I felt that I was making a more blessed use of the scanty eloquence with which heaven has deigned to endow me."

The scales fell from Fabrizio's eyes; the Duchessa's many letters, filled with transports of affection, never condescended to tell him anything. The Duchessa swore to him that she would leave Parma for ever, unless presently he returned there in triumph. "The Conte will do for you," she wrote to him in the letter that accompanied the Archbishop's, "everything that is humanly possible. As for myself, you have changed my character with this fine escapade of yours; I am now as great a miser as the banker Tombone; I have dismissed all my workmen, I have done more, I have dictated to the Conte the inventory of my fortune, which turns out to be far less considerable than I supposed. After the death of the excellent Conte Pietranera, whom, by the way, you would have done far better to avenge, instead of exposing your life to a creature of Giletti's sort, I was left with an income of twelve hundred francs and five thousand francs of debts; I remember, among other things, that I had two and a half dozen white satin slippers coming from Paris and not a single pair of shoes to wear in the street. I have almost made up my mind to take the three hundred thousand francs which the Duca has left me, the whole of which I intended to use in erecting a magnificent tomb to him. Besides, it is the Marchesa Raversi who is your principal enemy, that is to say mine; if you find life dull by yourself at Bologna, you have only to say the word, I shall come and join you. Here are four more bills of exchange," and so on.

The Duchessa said not a word to Fabrizio of the opinion that was held in Parma of his affair, she wished above all things to comfort him, and in any event the death of a ridiculous creature like Giletti did not seem to her the sort of thing that could be seriously charged against a del Dongo. "How

many Gilettis have not our ancestors sent into the other world," she said to the Conte, "without anyone's ever taking it into his head to reproach them with it?"

Fabrizio, taken completely by surprise, and getting for the first time a glimpse of the true state of things, set himself down to study the Archbishop's letter. Unfortunately the Archbishop himself believed him to be better informed than he actually was. Fabrizio gathered that the principal cause of the Marchesa Raversi's triumph lay in the fact that it was impossible to find any eye-witnesses of the fatal combat. The footman who had been the first to bring the news to Parma had been at the village inn at Sanguigna when the fight occurred; little Marietta and the old woman who acted as her mother had vanished, and the Marchesa had bought the vetturino who drove the carriage, and who had now made an abominable deposition. "Although the proceedings are enveloped in the most profound mystery," wrote the Archbishop in his Ciceronian style, "and directed by the Fiscal General, Rassi, of whom Christian charity alone can restrain me from speaking evil, but who has made his fortune by harrying his wretched prisoners as the greyhound harries the hare; although this Rassi, I say, whose turpitude and venality your imagination would be powerless to exaggerate, has been appointed to take charge of the case by an angry Prince, I have been able to read the three depositions of the vetturino. By a signal piece of good fortune, the wretch contradicts himself. And I shall add, since I am addressing my Grand Vicar, him who, after myself, is to have the charge of this Diocese, that I have sent for the curate of the parish in which this straying sinner resides. I shall tell you, my dearly beloved son, but under the seal of the confessional, that this curate already knows, through the wife of the vetturino, the number of scudi that he has received from the Marchesa Raversi; I shall not venture to say that the Marchesa insisted upon his slandering you, but that is probable. The scudi were transmitted to him through a wretched priest who performs functions of a base order in the Marchesa's. household, and whom I have been obliged to banish from the altar for the second time. I shall not weary you with an account of various other actions which you might expect from me, and which, moreover, enter into my duty. A Canon, your colleague at the Cathedral, who is a little too prone at times to remember the influence conferred upon him by the wealth of his family, to which, by divine permission, he is now the sole heir, having allowed himself to say in the house of Conte Zurla, the Minister of the

Interior, that he regarded this bagattella (he referred to the killing of the unfortunate Giletti) as proved against you, I summoned him to appear before me, and there, in the presence of my three other Vicars General, of my Chaplain and of two curates who happened to be in the waiting-room, I requested him to communicate to us his brethren the elements of the complete conviction which he professed to have acquired against one of his colleagues at the Cathedral; the unhappy man was able to articulate only the most inconclusive arguments; every voice was raised against him, and, although I did not think it my duty to add more than a very few words, he burst into tears and made us the witnesses of his full confession of his complete error, upon which I promised him secrecy in my name and in the names of the persons who had been present at the discussion, always on the condition that he would devote all his zeal to correcting the false impressions that might have been created by the language employed by him during the previous fortnight.

"I shall not repeat to you, my dear son, what you must long have known, namely that of the thirty-four contadini employed on the excavations undertaken by Conte Mosca, whom the Raversi pretends to have been paid by you to assist you in a crime, thirty-two were at the bottom of their trench, wholly taken up with their work, when you armed yourself with the hunting knife and employed it to defend your life against the man who had attacked you thus unawares. Two of their number, who were outside the trench, shouted to the others: 'They are murdering Monsignore!' This cry alone reveals your innocence in all its whiteness. Very well, the Fiscal General Rassi maintains that these two men have disappeared; furthermore, they have found eight of the men who were at the bottom of the trench; at their first examination, six declared that they had heard the cry: 'They are murdering Monsignore!' I know, through indirect channels, that at their fifth examination, which was held yesterday evening, five declared that they could not remember distinctly whether they had heard the cry themselves or whether it had been reported to them by their comrades. Orders have been given that I am to be informed of the place of residence of these excavators, and their parish priests will make them understand that they are damning themselves if, in order to gain a few soldi, they allow themselves to alter the truth."

The good Archbishop went into endless details, as may be judged by those we have extracted from his letter. Then he added, using the Latin tongue:

“This affair is nothing less than an attempt to bring about a change of government. If you are sentenced, it can be only to the galleys or to death, in which case I should intervene by declaring from my Archepiscopal Throne that I know you to be innocent, that you simply and solely defended your life against a brigand, and that finally I have forbidden you to return to Parma for so long as your enemies shall be triumphant there; I propose even to stigmatise, as he deserves, the Fiscal General; the hatred felt for that man is as common as esteem for his character is rare. But finally, on the eve of the day on which this Fiscal is to pronounce so unjust a sentence, the Duchessa Sanseverina will leave the town, and perhaps even the States of Parma: in that event, no doubt is felt that the Conte will hand in his resignation. Then, very probably, General Fabio Conti will come into office and the Marchesa Raversi will be triumphant. The great mistake in your case is that no skilled person has been appointed to take charge of the procedure necessary to bring your innocence into the light of day, and to foil the attempts that have been made to suborn witnesses. The Conte believes that he is playing this part; but he is too great a gentleman to stoop to certain details; besides, in his capacity as Minister of Police, he was obliged to issue, at the first moment, the most severe orders against you. Lastly, dare I say it, our Sovereign Lord believes you to be guilty, or at least feigns that belief, and has introduced a certain bitterness into the affair.” (The words corresponding to “our Sovereign Lord” and “feigns that belief” were in Greek, and Fabrizio felt infinitely obliged to the Archbishop for having had the courage to write them. With a pen-knife he cut this line out of the letter, and destroyed it on the spot.)

Fabrizio broke off a score of times while reading this letter; he was carried away by transports of the liveliest gratitude: he replied at once in a letter of eight pages. Often he was obliged to raise his head so that his tears should not fall on the paper. Next day, as he was sealing this letter, he felt that it was too worldly in tone. “I shall write it in Latin,” he said to himself, “that will make it appear more seemly to the worthy Archbishop.” But, while he was seeking to construct fine Latin phrases of great length, in the true Ciceronian style, he remembered that one day the Archbishop, in speaking to him of Napoleon, had made a point of calling him Buonaparte; at that instant there vanished all the emotion that, on the previous day, had moved him to tears.

“O King of Italy!” he exclaimed, “that loyalty which so many others swore to thee in thy lifetime, I shall preserve for thee after thy death. He is fond of me, no doubt, but because I am a del Dongo and he a son of the people.” So that his fine letter in Italian might not be wasted, Fabrizio made a few necessary alterations in it, and addressed it to Conte Mosca.

That same day, Fabrizio met in the street little Marietta; she flushed with joy and made a sign to him to follow her without speaking. She made swiftly for a deserted archway; there, she pulled forward the black lace shawl which, following the local custom, covered her head, so that she could not be recognised; then turning round quickly:

“How is it,” she said to Fabrizio, “that you are walking freely in the street like this?” Fabrizio told her his story.

“Good God! You were at Ferrara! And there was I looking for you everywhere in the place! You must know that I quarrelled with the old woman, because she wanted to take me to Venice, where I knew quite well that you would never go, because you are on the Austrian black list. I sold my gold necklace to come to Bologna, I had a presentiment that I should have the happiness of meeting you here; the old woman arrived two days after me. And so I shan’t ask you to come and see us, she would go on making those dreadful demands for money which make me so ashamed. We have lived very comfortably since the fatal day you remember, and haven’t spent a quarter of what you gave us. I would rather not come and see you at the Albergo del Pellegrino, it would be a pubblicità. Try to find a little room in a quiet street, and at the Ave Maria” (nightfall) “I shall be here, under this same archway.” So saying, she took to her heels.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

All serious thoughts were forgotten on the unexpected appearance of this charming person. Fabrizio settled himself to live at Bologna in a joy and security that were profound. This artless tendency to take delight in everything that entered into his life shewed through in the letters which he wrote to the Duchessa; to such an extent that she began to take offence. Fabrizio paid little attention; he wrote, however, in abridged symbols on the face of his watch: “When I write to the D., must never say When I was prelate, when I was in the Church: that annoys her.” He had bought a pair of ponies with which he was greatly pleased: he used to harness them to a hired carriage whenever little Marietta wished to pay a visit to any of the enchanting spots in the neighbourhood of Bologna; almost every evening he drove her to the Cascata del Reno. On their way back, he would call on the friendly Crescentini, who regarded himself as to some extent Marietta’s father.

“Upon my soul, if this is the caffè life which seemed to me so ridiculous for a man of any worth, I did wrong to reject it,” Fabrizio said to himself. He forgot that he never went near a caffè except to read the Constitutionnel, and that, since he was a complete stranger to everyone in Bologna, the gratification of vanity did not enter at all into his present happiness. When he was not with little Marietta, he was to be seen at the Observatory, where he was taking a course in astronomy; the Professor had formed a great affection for him, and Fabrizio used to lend him his ponies on Sundays, to cut a figure with his wife on the Corso della Montagnola.

He loathed the idea of harming any living creature, however undeserving that creature might be. Marietta was resolutely opposed to his seeing the old woman, but one day, when she was at church, he went up to visit the Mammaccia, who flushed with anger when she saw him enter the room. “This is a case where one plays the del Dongo,” he said to himself.

“How much does Marietta earn in a month when she is working?” he cried, with the air with which a self-respecting young man, in Paris, enters the

balcony at the Bouffes.

“Fifty scudi.”

“You are lying, as usual; tell the truth, or, by God, you shall not have a centesimo!”

“Very well, she was getting twenty-two scudi in our company at Parma, when we had the bad luck to meet you; I was getting twelve scudi, and we used to give Giletti, our protector, a third of what each of us earned. Out of which, every month almost, Giletti would make Marietta a present; the present might be worth a couple of scudi.”

“You’re lying still; you never had more than four scudi. But if you are good to Marietta, I will engage you as though I were an impresario; every month you shall have twelve scudi for yourself and twenty-two for her; but if I see her with red eyes, I make you bankrupt.”

“You’re very stiff and proud; very well, your fine generosity will be the ruin of us,” replied the old woman in a furious tone; “we lose our avviamento” (our connexion). “When we have the enormous misfortune to be deprived of Your Excellency’s protection, we shall no longer be known in any of the companies, they will all be filled up; we shall not find any engagement, and, all through you, we shall starve to death.”

“Go to the devil,” said Fabrizio as he left the room.

“I shall not go to the devil, you impious wretch! But I will go straight away to the police office, where they shall learn from me that you are a Monsignore who has flung his cassock to the winds, and that you are no more Giuseppe Bossi than I am.” Fabrizio had already gone some way down the stairs. He returned.

“In the first place, the police know better than you what my real name may be; but if you take it into your head to denounce me, if you do anything so infamous,” he said to her with great seriousness, “Lodovico shall talk to you, and it is not six slashes with the knife that your old carcass shall get, but two dozen, and you will be six months in hospital, and no tobacco.”

The old woman turned pale, and dashed at Fabrizio's hand, which she tried to kiss.

"I accept with gratitude the provision that you are making for Marietta and me. You look so good that I took you for a fool; and, you bear in mind, others besides myself may make the same error; I advise you always to adopt a more noblemanly air." Then she added with an admirable impudence: "You will reflect upon this good advice, and, as the winter is not far off, you will make Marietta and me a present of two good jackets of that fine English stuff which they sell at the big shop in the Piazza San Petronio."

The love of the pretty Marietta offered Fabrizio all the charms of the most delightful friendship, which set him dreaming of the happiness of the same order which he might have been finding in the Duchessa's company.

"But is it not a very pleasant thing," he asked himself at times, "that I am not susceptible to that exclusive and passionate preoccupation which they call love? Among the intimacies into which chance has brought me at Novara or at Naples, have I ever met a woman whose company, even in the first few days, was to my mind preferable to riding a good horse that I did not know? What they call love," he went on, "can that be just another lie? I feel myself in love, no doubt, as I feel a good appetite at six o'clock! Can it be out of this slightly vulgar propensity that those liars have fashioned the love of Othello, the love of Tancred? Or am I indeed to suppose that I am constructed differently from other men? That my soul should be lacking in one passion, why should that be? It would be a singular destiny!"

At Naples, — especially in the latter part of his time there, Fabrizio had met women who, proud of their rank, their beauty and the position held in society by the adorers whom they had sacrificed to him, had attempted to lead him. On discovering their intention, Fabrizio had broken with them in the most summary and open fashion. "Well," he said to himself, "if I ever allow myself to be carried away by the pleasure, which no doubt is extremely keen, of being on friendly terms with that charming woman who is known as the Duchessa Sanseverina, I shall be exactly like that stupid Frenchman who killed the goose that was laying the golden eggs. It is to the Duchessa that I owe the sole happiness which has ever come to me from sentiments of affection: my friendship for her is my life, and besides,

without her, what am I? A poor exile reduced to living from hand to mouth in a tumble-down country house outside Novara. I remember how, during the heavy autumn rains, I used to be obliged, at night, for fear of accidents, to fix up an umbrella over the tester of my bed. I rode the agent's horses, which he was good enough to allow out of respect for my blue blood (for my influence, that is), but he was beginning to find my stay there a trifle long; my father had made me an allowance of twelve hundred francs, and thought himself damned for having given bread to a Jacobin. My poor mother and sisters let themselves go without new clothes to keep me in a position to make a few little presents to my mistresses. This way of being generous pierced me to the heart. And besides, people were beginning to suspect my poverty, and the young noblemen of the district would have been feeling sorry for me next. Sooner or later some prig would have let me see his contempt for a poor Jacobin whose plans had come to grief, for in those people's eyes I was nothing more than that. I should have given or received some doughty thrust with a sword which would have carried me off to the fortress of Fenestrelle, or else I should have been obliged to take refuge again in Switzerland, still on my allowance of twelve hundred francs. I have the good fortune to be indebted to the Duchessa for the absence of all these evils; besides, it is she who feels for me the transports of affection which I ought to be feeling for her.

"Instead of that ridiculous, pettifogging existence which would have made me a sad dog, a fool, for the last four years I have been living in a big town, and have an excellent carriage, which things have preserved me from feelings of envy and all the base sentiments of a provincial life. This too indulgent aunt is always scolding me because I do not draw enough money from the banker. Do I wish to ruin for all time so admirable a position? Do I wish to lose the one friend that I have in the world? All I need do is to utter a falsehood; all I need do is to say to a charming woman, a woman who is perhaps without a counterpart in the world, and for whom I feel the most passionate friendship: 'I love you,' I who do not know what it is to love amorously. She would spend the day finding fault with me for the absence of these transports which are unknown to me. Marietta, or the other hand, who does not see into my heart, and takes; caress for a transport of the soul, thinks me madly in love and looks upon herself as the most fortunate of women.

“As a matter of fact, the only slight acquaintance I have ever had with that tender obsession which is called, I believe, love, was with the young Aniken in the inn at Zonders, near the Belgian frontier.”

It is with regret that we have to record here one of Fabrizio’s worst actions; in the midst of this tranquil life, a wretched pique of vanity took possession of this heart rebellious to love and led it far astray. Simultaneously with himself there happened to be at Bologna the famous Fausta F —— — , unquestionably one of the finest singers of the day and perhaps the most capricious woman that was ever seen. The excellent poet Burati, of Venice, had composed the famous satirical sonnet about her, which at that time was to be heard on the lips alike of princes and of the meanest street Arabs:

“To wish and not to wish, to adore and on the same day to detest, to find contentment only in inconstancy, to scorn what the world worships, while the world worships it: Fausta has these defects and many more. Look not therefore upon that serpent. If thou seest her, imprudent man, thou forgettest her caprices. Hast thou the happiness to hear her voice, thou dost forget thyself, and love makes of thee, in a moment, what Circe in days of yore made of the companions of Ulysses.”

For the moment, this miracle of beauty had come under the spell of the enormous whiskers and haughty insolence of the young Conte M —— , to such an extent as not to be revolted by his abominable jealousy. Fabrizio saw this Conte in the streets of Bologna and was shocked by the air of superiority with which he took up the pavement and deigned to display his graces to the public. This young man was extremely rich, imagined that everything was permitted him, and, as his prepotenze had brought him threats of punishment, never appeared in public save with the escort of nine or ten buli (a sort of cut-throat) clad in his livery, whom he had brought from his estates in the environs of Brescia. Fabrizio’s eye had met once or twice that of this terrible Conte, whence chance led him to hear Fausta sing. He was astonished by the angelic sweetness of her voice: he had never imagined anything like it; he was indebted to it for sensations of supreme happiness, which made a pleasing contrast to the placidity of his life at the time. Could this at last be love? he asked himself. Thoroughly curious to taste that sentiment, and amused moreover by the thought of braving Conte M —— , whose expression was more terrifying than that of any drum-major, our hero

let himself fall into the childish habit of passing a great deal too often in front of the palazzo Tanari, which Conte M —— had taken for Fausta.

One day, as night was beginning to fall, Fabrizio, seeking to catch Fausta's eye, was greeted by peals of laughter of the most pointed kind proceeding from the Conte's buli, who were assembled by the door of the palazzo Tanari. He hastened home, armed himself well, and again passed before the palazzo. Fausta, concealed behind her shutters, was awaiting his return, and gave him due credit for it. M —— , jealous of the whole world, became specially jealous of Signor Giuseppe Bossi, and indulged in ridiculous utterances; whereupon every morning our hero had delivered at his door a letter which contained only these words:

"Signor Giuseppe Bossi destroys troublesome insects and is staying at the Pellegrino, Via Larga, No. 79."

Conte M —— , accustomed to the respect which was everywhere assured him by his enormous fortune, his blue blood and the physical courage of his thirty servants, declined altogether to understand the language of this little missive.

Fabrizio wrote others of the sort to Fausta; M —— posted spies round this rival, who perhaps was not unattractive; first of all, he learned his true name, and later that, for the present, he could not shew his face at Parma. A few days after this, Conte M —— , his buli, his magnificent horses and Fausta set off together for Parma.

Fabrizio, becoming excited, followed them next day. In vain did the good Lodovico utter pathetic remonstrances: Fabrizio turned a deaf ear, and Lodovico, who was himself extremely brave, admired him for it; besides, this removal brought him nearer to the pretty mistress he had left at Casalmaggiore. Through Lodovico's efforts, nine or ten old soldiers of Napoleon's regiments re-enlisted under Signor Giuseppe Bossi, in the capacity of servants. "Provided," Fabrizio told himself, when committing the folly of going after Fausta, "that I have no communication either with the Minister of Police, Conte Mosca, or with the Duchessa, I expose only myself to risk. I shall explain later on to my aunt that I was going in search of love, that beautiful thing which I have never encountered. The fact is that I think

of Fausta even when I am not looking at her. But is it the memory of her voice that I love, or her person?" Having ceased to think of an ecclesiastical career, Fabrizio had grown a pair of moustaches and whiskers almost as terrible as those of Conte M —— , and these disguised him to some extent. He set up his headquarters not at Parma — that would have been too imprudent — but in a neighbouring village, in the woods, on the road to Sacca, where his aunt had her country house. Following Lodovico's advice, he gave himself out in this village as the valet of a great English nobleman of original tastes, who spent a hundred thousand francs a year on providing himself with the pleasures of the chase, and would arrive shortly from the Lake of Como, where he was detained by the trout-fishing. Fortunately for him, the charming little palazzo which Conte M —— had taken for the fair Fausta was situated at the southern extremity of the city of Parma, precisely on the road to Sacca, and Fausta's windows looked out over the fine avenues of tall trees which extend beneath the high tower of the citadel. Fabrizio was completely unknown in this little frequented quarter; he did not fail to have Conte M —— followed, and one day when that gentleman had just emerged from the admirable singer's door, he had the audacity to appear in the street in broad daylight; it must be admitted that he was mounted upon an excellent horse, and well armed. A party of musicians, of the sort that frequent the streets in Italy and are sometimes excellent, came and planted their viols under Fausta's window; after playing a prelude they sang, and quite well too, a cantata composed in her honour. Fausta came to the window and had no difficulty in distinguishing a young man of extremely polite manners, who, stopping his horse in the middle of the street, bowed to her first of all, then began to direct at her a gaze that could have but one meaning. In spite of the exaggeratedly English costume adopted by Fabrizio, she soon recognised the author of the passionate letters that had brought about her departure from Bologna. "That is a curious creature," she said to herself; "it seems to me that I am going to fall in love with him. I have a hundred louis in hand, I can quite well give that terrible Conte M —— the slip; if it comes to that, he has no spirit, he never does anything unexpected, and is only slightly amusing because of the bloodthirsty appearance of his escort."

On the following day Fabrizio, having learned that every morning at eleven o'clock Fausta went to hear mass in the centre of the town, in that same church of San Giovanni which contained the tomb of his great-uncle, Archbishop Ascanio del Dongo, made bold to follow her there. To tell the

truth, Ludovico had procured him a fine English wig with hair of the most becoming red. Inspired by the colour of his wig, which was that of the flames that were devouring his heart, he composed a sonnet which Fausta thought charming; an unseen hand had taken care to place it upon her piano. This little war lasted for quite a week; but Fabrizio found that, in spite of the steps he was taking in every direction, he was making no real progress; Fausta refused to see him. He strained the effect of singularity; she admitted afterwards that she was afraid of him. Fabrizio was kept going now only by a faint hope of coming to feel what is known as love, but frequently he felt bored.

"Let us leave this place, Signore," Lodovico used to urge him; "you are not in the least in love: I can see that you have the most desperate coolness and common sense. Besides, you are making no headway; if only for shame, let us clear out." Fabrizio was ready to go at the first moment of ill-humour, when he heard that Fausta was to sing at the Duchessa Sanseverina's. "Perhaps that sublime voice will succeed in softening my heart," he said to himself; and he actually ventured to penetrate in disguise into the palazzo where he was known to every eye. We may imagine the Duchessa's emotion when, right at the end of the concert, she noticed a man in the full livery of a chasseur, standing by the door of the big drawing-room: that pose reminded her of someone. She went to look for Conte Mosca, who only then informed her of the signal and truly incredible folly of Fabrizio. He took it extremely well. This love for another than the Duchessa pleased him greatly; the Conte, a perfect galantuomo, apart from politics, acted upon the maxim that he could himself find happiness only so long as the Duchessa was happy. "I shall save him from himself," he said to his mistress; "judge of our enemies' joy if he were arrested in this palazzo! Also I have more than a hundred men with me here, and that is why I made them ask you for the keys of the great reservoir. He gives out that he is madly in love with Fausta, and up to the present has failed to get her away from Conte M —— , who lets the foolish woman live the life of a queen." The Duchessa's features betrayed the keenest grief; so Fabrizio was nothing more than a libertine, utterly incapable of any tender and serious feeling. "And not to come and see us! That is what I shall never be able to forgive him!" she said at length; "and I writing to him every day to Bologna!"

“I greatly admire his restraint,” replied the Conte; “he does not wish to compromise us by his escapade, and it will be amusing to hear him tell us about it.”

Fausta was too great a fool to be able to keep quiet about what was on her mind; the day after the concert, every melody in which her eyes had addressed to that tall young man dressed as a chasseur, she spoke to Conte M —— of an unknown admirer. “Where do you see him?” asked the Conte in a fury. “In the streets, in church,” replied Fausta, at a loss for words. At once she sought to atone for her imprudence, or at least to eliminate from it anything that could suggest Fabrizio: she dashed into an endless description of a tall young man with red hair; he had blue eyes; no doubt he was some Englishman, very rich and very awkward, or some prince. At this word Conte M —— , who did not shine in the accuracy of his perceptions, conceived the idea, deliciously flattering to his vanity, that this rival was none other than the Crown Prince of Parma. This poor melancholy young man, guarded by five or six governors, under-governors, preceptors, etc., etc., who never allowed him out of doors until they had first held council together, used to cast strange glances at all the passable women whom he was permitted to approach. At the Duchessa’s concert, his rank had placed him in front of all the rest of the audience in an isolated armchair within three yards of the fair Fausta, and his stare had been supremely shocking to Conte M —— — . This hallucination of an exquisite vanity, that he had a Prince for a rival, greatly amused Fausta, who took delight in confirming it with a hundred details artlessly supplied.

“Your” race,” she asked the Conte, “is surely as old as that of the Farnese, to which this young man belongs?”

“What do you mean? As old? I have no bastardy in my family, thank you.”†

[† Pier–Luigi, the first sovereign of the Farnese family, so renowned for his virtues, was, as is generally known, a natural son of His Holiness Pope Paul III.]

As luck would have it, Conte M —— never had an opportunity of studying this pretended rival at his leisure, which confirmed him in the flattering idea of his having a Prince for antagonist. The fact was that whenever the

interests of his enterprise did not summon Fabrizio to Parma, he remained in the woods round Sacca and on the bank of the Po. Conte M —— was indeed more proud, but was also more prudent since he had imagined himself to be on the way to disputing the heart of Fausta with a Prince; he begged her very seriously to observe the greatest restraint in all her doings. After flinging himself on his knees like a jealous and impassioned lover, he declared to her in so many words that his honour was involved in her not being made the dupe of the young Prince.

“Excuse me, I should not be his dupe if I cared for him; I must say, I have never yet seen a Prince at my feet.”

“If you yield,” he went on with a haughty stare, “I may not perhaps be able to avenge myself on the Prince but I will, most assuredly, be avenged”; and he went out, slamming the doors behind him. Had Fabrizio presented himself at that moment, he would have won his cause.

“If you value your life,” her lover said to her that evening as he bade her good night after the performance, “see that it never comes to my ears that the young Prince has been inside your house. I can do nothing to him, curse him, but do not make me remember that I can do everything to you!”

“Ah, my little Fabrizio,” cried Fausta, “if I only knew where to find you!”

Wounded vanity may carry a young man far who is rich and from his cradle has always been surrounded by flatterers. The very genuine passion that Conte M —— felt for Fausta revived with furious intensity; it was in no way checked by the dangerous prospect of his coming into conflict with the only son of the Sovereign in whose dominions he happened to be staying; at the same time he had not the courage to try to see this Prince, or at least to have him followed. Not being able to attack him in any other way, M —— — dared to consider making him ridiculous. “I shall be banished for ever from the States of Parma,” he said to himself; “Pshaw! What does that matter?” Had he sought to reconnoitre the enemy’s position, he would have learned that the poor young Prince never went out of doors without being followed by three or four old men, tiresome guardians of etiquette, and that the one pleasure of his choice that was permitted him in the world was mineralogy. By day, as by night, the little palazzo occupied by Fausta, to which the best

society of Parma went in crowds, was surrounded by watchers; M —— knew, hour by hour, what she was doing, and, more important still, what others were doing round about her. There is this to be said in praise of the precautions taken by her jealous lover: this eminently capricious woman had at first no idea of the multiplication of his vigilance. The reports of all his agents informed Conte M —— that a very young man, wearing a wig of red hair, appeared very often beneath Fausta's windows, but always in a different disguise. "Evidently, it is the young Prince," thought M —— , "otherwise, why the disguise? And, by gad, a man like me is not made to give way to him. But for the usurpations of the Venetian Republic, I should be a Sovereign Prince myself."

On the feast of Santo Stefano, the reports of the spies took on a more sombre hue; they seemed to indicate that Fausta was beginning to respond to the stranger's advances. "I can go away this instant, and take the woman with me!" M —— said to himself; "but no! At Bologna I fled from del Dongo; here I should be fleeing before a Prince. But what could the young man say? He might think that he had succeeded in making me afraid. And, by God, I come of as good a family as he." M —— — was furious, but, to crown his misery, he made a particular point of not letting himself appear in the eyes of Fausta, whom he knew to be of a mocking spirit, in the ridiculous character of a jealous lover. On Santo Stefano's day, then, after having spent an hour with her and been welcomed by her with an ardour which seemed to him the height of insincerity, he left her, shortly before eleven o'clock, getting ready to go and hear mass in the church of San Giovanni. Conte M —— returned home, put on the shabby black coat of a young student of theology, and hastened to San Giovanni; he chose a place behind one of the tombs that adorn the third chapel on the right; he could see everything that went on in the church beneath the arm of a cardinal who is represented as kneeling upon his tomb; this statue kept the light from the back of the chapel and gave him sufficient concealment. Presently he saw Fausta arrive, more beautiful than ever. She was in full array, and a score of admirers, drawn from the highest ranks of society, furnished her with an escort. Joyous smiles broke from her eyes and lips. "It is evident," thought the jealous wretch, "that she counts upon meeting here the man she loves, whom for a long time, perhaps, thanks to me, she has been prevented from seeing." Suddenly, the keen look of happiness in her eyes seemed to double in intensity; "My rival is here," muttered M —— , and the fury of his outraged vanity knew no bounds.

“What sort of figure do I cut here, serving as pendant to a young Prince in disguise?” But despite every effort on his part, he could never succeed in identifying this rival, for whom his famished gaze kept seeking in every direction.

All through the service Fausta, after letting her eyes wander over the whole church, would end by bringing her gaze to rest, charged with love and happiness, on the dim corner in which M ——— — was concealed. In an impassioned heart, love is liable to exaggerate the slightest shades of meaning; it draws from them the most ridiculous conclusions; did not poor M ——— — end by persuading himself that Fausta had seen him, that, having in spite of his efforts perceived his deadly jealousy, she wished to reproach him with it and at the same time to console him for it with these tender glances?

The tomb of the cardinal, behind which M ——— — had taken his post of observation, was raised four or five feet above the marble floor of San Giovanni. The fashionable mass ending about one o’clock, the majority of the faithful left the church, and Fausta dismissed the beaux of the town, on a pretext of devotion; as she remained kneeling on her chair, her eyes, which had grown more tender and more brilliant, were fixed on M ——— — ; since there were now only a few people left in the building, she no longer put her eyes to the trouble of ranging over the whole of it before coming joyfully to rest on the cardinal’s statue. “What delicacy!’’ thought Conte M ——— — , imagining that he was the object of her gaze. At length Fausta rose and quickly left the church after first making some odd movements with her hands.

M ——— — , blind with love and almost entirely relieved of his mad jealousy, had left his post to fly to his mistress’s palazzo and thank her a thousand, thousand times, when, as he passed in front of the cardinal’s tomb, he noticed a young man all in black: this funereal being had remained until then on his knees, close against the epitaph on the tomb, in such a position that the eyes of the jealous lover, in their search for him, must pass over his head and miss him altogether.

This young man rose, moved briskly away, and was immediately surrounded by seven or eight persons, somewhat clumsy in their gait, of a singular

appearance, who seemed to belong to him. M —— hurried after him, but, without any marked sign of obstruction, was stopped in the narrow passage formed by the wooden drum of the door by these clumsy men who were protecting his rival; and when finally, at the tail of their procession, he reached the street, he was in time only to see someone shut the door of a carriage of humble aspect, which, by an odd contrast, was drawn by a pair of excellent horses, and in a moment had passed out of sight.

He returned home panting with fury; presently there arrived his watchers, who reported impassively that that morning the mysterious lover, disguised as a priest, had been kneeling in an attitude of great devotion against a tomb which stood in the entrance of a dark chapel in the church of San Giovanni. Fausta had remained in the church until it was almost empty, and had then rapidly exchanged certain signs with the stranger; with her hands she had seemed to be making a series of crosses. M —— hastened to the faithless one's house; for the first time she could not conceal her uneasiness; she told him, with the artless mendacity of a passionate woman, that, as usual, she had gone to San Giovanni, but that she had seen no sign there of that man who was persecuting her. On hearing these words, M —— — , beside himself with rage, railed at her as at the vilest of creatures, told her everything that he had seen himself, and, the boldness of her lies increasing with the force of his accusations, took his dagger and flung himself upon her. With great coolness Fausta said to him:

"Very well, everything you complain of is the absolute truth, but I have tried to keep it from you so that you should not go rushing desperately into mad plans of vengeance which may ruin us both; for, let me tell you once for all, as far as I can make out, the man who is persecuting me with his attentions is one who is accustomed not to meet with any opposition to his wishes, in this country at any rate." Having very skilfully reminded M —— that, after all, he had no legal authority over her, Fausta ended by saying that probably she would not go again to the church of San Giovanni. M —— was desperately in love; a trace of coquetry had perhaps combined itself with prudence in the young woman's heart; he felt himself disarmed. He thought of leaving Parma; the young Prince, however powerful he might be, could not follow him, or if he did follow him would cease to be anything more than his equal. But pride represented to him afresh that this departure must inevitably have the appearance of a flight, and Conte M —— forbade himself to think of it.

“He has no suspicion that my little Fabrizio is here,” the singer said to herself, delighted, “and now we can make a fool of him in the most priceless fashion!”

Fabrizio had no inkling of his good fortune; finding next day that the singer’s windows were carefully shuttered, and not seeing her anywhere, he began to feel that the joke was lasting rather too long. He felt some remorse. “In what sort of position am I putting that poor Conte Mosca, and he the Minister of Police! They will think he is my accomplice, I shall have come to this place to ruin his career! But if I abandon a project I have been following for so long, what will the Duchessa say when I tell her of my essays in love?”

One evening when, on the point of giving up everything, he was moralising thus to himself, as he strolled under the tall trees which divided Fausta’s palazzo from the citadel, he observed that he was being followed by a spy of diminutive stature; in vain did he attempt to shake him off by turning down various streets, this microscopic being seemed always to cling to his heels. Growing impatient, he dashed into a lonely street running along the bank of the Parma, where his men were ambushed; on a signal from him they leaped out upon the poor little spy, who flung himself at their feet; it was Bettina, Fausta’s maid; after three days of boredom and seclusion, disguised as a man to escape the dagger of Conte M —— , of whom her mistress and she were in great dread, she had undertaken to come out and tell Fabrizio to see someone who loved him passionately and was burning to see him, but that the said person could not appear any more in the church of San Giovanni. “The time has come,” Fabrizio said to himself, “hurrah for persistence!”

The little maid was exceedingly pretty, a fact which took Fabrizio’s mind from his moralisings. She told him that the avenue and all the streets through which he had passed that evening were being jealously watched, though quite unobtrusively, by M — —’s spies. They had taken rooms on the ground floors or on the first storeys of the houses; hidden behind the shutters and keeping absolutely silent, they observed everything that went on in the apparently quite deserted street, and heard all that was said.

“If those spies had recognised my voice,” said little Bettina, “I should have been stabbed without mercy as soon as I got back to the house, and my poor

mistress with me, perhaps."

This terror rendered her charming in Fabrizio's eyes.

"Conte M —— — ," she went on, "is furious, and the Signora knows that he will stick at nothing. . . . She told me to say to you that she would like to be a hundred leagues away from here with you."

Then she gave an account of the scene on St. Stephen's day, and of the fury of M —— , who had missed none of the glances and signs of affection which Fausta, madly in love that day with Fabrizio, had directed towards him. The Conte had drawn his dagger, had seized Fausta by the hair, and, but for her presence of mind, she must have perished.

Fabrizio made the pretty Bettina come up to a little apartment which he had near there. He told her that he came from Turin, and was the son of an important personage who happened at that moment to be in Parma, which meant that he had to be most careful in his movements. Bettina replied with a smile that he was a far grander gentleman than he chose to appear. It took our hero some little time to realise that the charming girl took him for no less a personage than the Crown Prince himself. Fausta was beginning to be frightened, and to love Fabrizio; she had taken the precaution of not mentioning his name to her maid, but of speaking to her always of the Prince. Finally Fabrizio admitted to the pretty girl that she had guessed aright: "But if my name gets out," he added, "in spite of the great passion of which I have furnished your mistress with so many proofs, I shall be obliged to cease to see her, and at once my father's Ministers, those rascally jokers whom I shall bring down from their high places some day, will not fail to send her an order to quit the country which up to now she has been adorning with her presence."

Towards morning, Fabrizio arranged with the little lady's maid a number of plans by which he might gain admission to Fausta's house. He summoned Lodovico and another of his retainers, a man of great cunning, who came to an understanding with Bettina while he himself wrote the most extravagant letter to Fausta; the situation allowed all the exaggerations of tragedy, and Fabrizio did not miss the opportunity. It was not until day was breaking that

he parted from the little lady's maid, whom he left highly satisfied with the ways of the young Prince.

It had been repeated a hundred times over that, Fausta having now come to an understanding with her lover, the latter was no longer to pass to and fro beneath the windows of the little palazzo except when he could be admitted there, and that then a signal would be given. But Fabrizio, in love with Bellina, and believing himself to have come almost to the point with Fausla, could not confine himself to his village two leagues outside Parma. The following evening, about midnight, he came on horseback and with a good escort to sing under Fausta's windows an air then in fashion, the words of which he altered. "Is not this the way in which our friends the lovers behave?" he asked himself.

Now that Fausta had shewn a desire to meet him, all this pursuit seemed to Fabrizio very tedious. "No, I am not really in love in the least," he assured himself as he sang (none too well) beneath the windows of the little palazzo; "Bellina seems lo me a hundred limes preferable to Fausta, and it is by her that I should like to be received at this moment." Fabrizio, distinctly bored, was returning to his village when, five hundred yards from Fausta's palazzo, fifteen or twenty men flung themselves upon him; four of them seized his horse by the bridle, two others look hold of his arms. Lodovico and Fabrizio's bravi were attacked, but managed to escape; they fired several shots with their pistols. All this was the affair of an instant: fifty lighted torches appeared in the street in the twinkling of an eye, as though by magic. All these men were well armed. Fabrizio had jumped down from his horse in spite of the men who were holding him; he tried lo clear a space round him; he even wounded one of the men who was gripping his arms in hands like a pair of vices; but he was greatly surprised to hear this man say to him, in the most respectful tone: "Your Highness will give me a good pension for this wound, which will be better for me than falling into the crime of high treason by drawing my sword against my Prince."

"So this is the punishment I get for my folly," thought Fabrizio; "I shall have damned myself for a sin which did not seem to me in the least attractive."

Scarcely had this little attempt at a battle finished, when a number of lackeys in full livery appeared with a sedan-chair gilded and painted in an odd

fashion. It was one of those grotesque chairs used by masked revellers at carnival time. Six men, with daggers in their hands, requested His Highness lo get into it, telling him that the cold night air might be injurious to his voice: they affected the most reverential forms, the title “Prince” being every moment repeated and almost shouted. The procession began to move on. Fabrizio counted in the street more than fifty men carrying lighted torches. It might be about one o’clock in the morning; all the populace was gazing out of the windows, the whole thing went off with a certain gravity. “I was afraid of dagger-thrusts on Conte M — —’s part,” Fabrizio said to himself; “he contents himself with making a fool of me; I had not suspected him of such good taste. But does he really think that he has the Prince to deal with? If he knows that I am only Fabrizio, ware the dirk!”

These fifty men carrying torches and the twenty armed men, after stopping for a long interval under Fausta’s windows, proceeded to parade before the finest palazzi in the town. A pair of maggiordomi, posted one on either side of the sedan-chair, asked His Highness from time to time whether he had any order to give them. Fabrizio took care not to lose his head; by the light which the torches cast he saw that Lodovico and his men were following the procession as closely as possible. Fabrizio said to himself: “Lodovico has only nine or ten men, and dares not attack.” From the interior of his sedan-chair he could see quite plainly that the men responsible for carrying out this practical joke were armed to the teeth. He made a show of talking and laughing with the maggiordomi who were looking after him. After more than two hours of this triumphal march, he saw that they were about to pass the end of the street in which the palazzo Sanseverina stood.

As they turned the corner, he quickly opened the door in the front of the chair, jumped out over one of the carrying poles, felled with a blow from his dagger one of the flunkeys who thrust a torch into his face; he received a stab in the shoulder from a dirk; a second flunkey singed his beard with his lighted torch, and finally Fabrizio reached Lodovico, to whom he shouted: “Kill! Kill everyone carrying a torch!” Lodovico used his sword, and delivered Fabrizio from two men who had started in pursuit of him. He arrived, running, at the door of the palazzo Sanseverina; out of curiosity the porter had opened the little door, three feet high, that was cut in the big door, and was gazing in bewilderment at this great mass of torches. Fabrizio sprang inside and shut this miniature door behind him; he ran to the garden

and escaped by a gate which opened on to an unfrequented street. An hour later, he was out of the town; at daybreak he crossed the frontier of the States of Modena, and was safe. That evening he entered Bologna. “Here is a fine expedition,” he said to himself; “I never even managed to speak to my charmer.” He made haste to write letters of apology to the Conte and the Duchessa, prudent letters which, while describing all that was going on in his heart, could not give away any information to an enemy. “I was in love with love,” he said to the Duchessa, “I have done everything in the world to acquire knowledge of it; but it appears that nature has refused me a heart to love, and to be melancholy; I cannot raise myself above the level of vulgar pleasure,” and so forth.

It would be impossible to give any idea of the stir that this escapade caused in Parma. The mystery of it excited curiosity: innumerable people had seen the torches and the sedan-chair. But who was the man they were carrying away, to whom every mark of respect was paid? No one of note was missing from the town next day.

The humble folk who lived in the street from which the prisoner had made his escape did indeed say that they had seen a corpse; but in daylight, when they ventured out of their houses, they found no other traces of the fray than quantities of blood spilled on the pavement. More than twenty thousand sight-seers came to visit the street that day. Italian towns are accustomed to singular spectacles, but the why and the wherefore of these are always known. What shocked Parma about this occurrence was that even a month afterwards, when people had ceased to speak of nothing but the torchlight procession, nobody, thanks to the prudence of Conte Mosca, had been able to guess the name of the rival who had sought to carry off Fausta from Conte M ——— . This jealous and vindictive lover had taken flight at the beginning of the parade. By the Conte’s order, Fausta was sent to the citadel. The Duchessa laughed heartily over a little act of injustice which the Conte was obliged to commit to put a stop to the curiosity of the Prince, who otherwise might have succeeded in hitting upon the name of Fabrizio.

There was to be seen at Parma a scholar, arrived there from the North to write a History of the Middle Ages; he was in search of manuscripts in the libraries, and the Conte had given him every possible facility. But this scholar, who was still quite young, shewed a violent temper; he believed, for

one thing, that everybody in Parma was trying to make a fool of him. It was true that the boys in the streets sometimes followed him on account of an immense shock of bright red hair which he displayed with pride. This scholar imagined that at his inn they were asking exaggerated prices for everything, and he never paid for the smallest trifle without first looking up its price in the Travels of a certain Mrs. Starke, a book which has gone into its twentieth edition because it indicates to the prudent Englishman the price of a turkey, an apple, a glass of milk, and so forth.

The scholar with the fiery crest, on the evening of the very day on which Fabrizio made this forced excursion, flew into a rage at his inn, and drew from his pocket a brace of small pistols to avenge himself on the cameriere who demanded two soldi for an indifferent peach. He was arrested, for to carry pocket pistols is a serious crime!

As this irascible scholar was long and lean, the Conte conceived the idea, next morning, of making him pass in the Prince's eyes as the rash fellow who, having tried to steal away Fausta from Conte M ——— , had afterwards been hoaxed. The carrying of pocket pistols is punishable at Parma with three years in the galleys; but this punishment is never enforced. After a fortnight in prison, during which time the scholar had seen no one but a lawyer who had put in him a terrible fright by his account of the atrocious laws aimed by the pusillanimity of those in power against the bearers of hidden arms, another lawyer visited the prison and told him of the expedition inflicted by Conte M ——— on a rival who had not yet been identified. "The police do not wish to admit to the Prince that they have not been able to find out who this rival is. Confess that you were seeking to find favour with Fausta; that fifty brigands carried you off while you were singing beneath her window; that for an hour they took you about the town in a sedan-chair without saying anything to you that was not perfectly proper. There is nothing humiliating about this confession, you are asked to say only one word. As soon as, by saying it, you have relieved the police from their difficulty, you will be put into a post-chaise and driven to the frontier, where they will bid you good-bye."

The scholar held out for a month; two or three times the Prince was on the point of having him brought to the Ministry of the Interior, and of being present in person at his examination. But at last he gave no more thought to

the matter when the scholar, losing patience, decided to confess everything, and was conveyed to the frontier. The Prince remained convinced that Conte M — —'s rival had a forest of red hair.

Three days after the escapade, while Fabrizio, who was in hiding at Bologna, was planning with the faithful Lodovico the best way to catch Conte M —— —, he learned that he too was hiding in a village in the mountains on the road to Florence. The Conte had only two or three of his buli with him; next day, just as he was coming home from his ride, he was seized by eight men in masks who gave him to understand that they were sbirri from Parma. They conducted him, after bandaging his eyes, to an inn two leagues farther up the mountains, where he found himself treated with the utmost possible respect, and an abundant supper awaiting him. He was served with the best wines of Italy and Spain.

"Am I a State prisoner then?" asked the Conte.

"Nothing of the sort," the masked Ludovico answered him, most politely. "You have given offence to a private citizen by taking upon yourself to have him carried about in a sedan-chair; tomorrow morning he wishes to fight a duel with you. If you kill him, you will find a pair of good horses, money, and relays prepared for you along the road to Genoa."

"What is the name of this fire-eater?" asked the Conte with irritation.

"He is called Bombace. You will have the choice of weapons and good seconds, thoroughly loyal, but it is essential that one of you die!"

"Why, it is murder, then!" said the Conte; growing frightened.

"Please God, no! It is simply a duel to the death with the young man whom you have had carried about the streets of Parma in the middle of the night, and whose honour would be tarnished if you remained alive. One or other of you is superfluous on this earth, therefore try to kill him; you shall have swords, pistols, sabres, all the weapons that can be procured at a few hours' notice, for we have to make haste; the police at Bologna are most diligent, as you perhaps know, and they must on no account interfere with this duel

which is necessary to the honour of the young man whom you have made to look foolish."

"But if this young man is a Prince. . . ."

"He is a private citizen like yourself, and indeed a great deal less wealthy than you, but he wishes to fight to the death, and he will force you to fight, I warn you."

"Nothing in the world frightens me!" cried M —— .

"That is just what your adversary most passionately desires," replied Lodovico. "To-morrow, at dawn, prepare to defend your life; it will be attacked by a man who has good reason to be extremely angry, and will not let you off lightly; I repeat that you will have the choice of weapons; and remember to make your will."

Next morning, about six o'clock, breakfast was brought to Conte M —— — , a door was then opened in the room in which he was confined, and he was made to step into the courtyard of a country inn; this courtyard was surrounded by hedges and walls of a certain height, and its doors had been carefully closed.

In a corner, upon a table which the Conte was requested to approach, he found several bottles of wine and brandy, two pistols, two swords, two sabres, paper and ink; a score of contadini stood in the windows of the inn which overlooked the courtyard. The Conte implored their pity. "They want to murder me," he cried, "save my life!"

"You deceive yourself, or you wish to deceive others," called out Fabrizio, who was at the opposite corner of the courtyard, beside a table strewn with weapons. He was in his shirtsleeves, and his face was concealed by one of those wire masks which one finds in fencing-rooms.

"I require you," Fabrizio went on, "to put on the wire mask which is lying beside you, then to advance towards me with a sword or with pistols; as you were told yesterday evening, you have the choice of weapons."

Conte M —— raised endless difficulties, and seemed most reluctant to fight; Fabrizio, for his part, was afraid of the arrival of the police, although they were in the mountains quite five leagues from Bologna. He ended by hurling at his rival the most atrocious insults; at last he had the good fortune to enrage Conte M —— — , who seized a sword and advanced upon him. The fight began quietly enough.

After a few minutes, it was interrupted by a great tumult. Our hero had been quite aware that he was involving himself in an action which, for the rest of his life, might be a subject of reproach or at least of slanderous imputations. He had sent Lodovico into the country to procure witnesses. Lodovico gave money to some strangers who were working in a neighbouring wood; they ran to the inn shouting, thinking that the game was to kill an enemy of the man who had paid them. When they reached the inn, Ludovico asked them to keep their eyes open and to notice whether either of the two young men who were fighting acted treacherously and took an unfair advantage over the other.

The fight, which had been interrupted for the time being by the cries of murder uttered by the contadini, was slow in beginning again. Fabrizio offered fresh insults to the fatuity of the Conte. “Signor Conte,” he shouted to him, “when one is insolent, one ought to be brave also. I feel that the conditions are hard on you; you prefer to pay people who are brave.” The Conte, once more stung to action, began to shout to him that he had for years frequented the fencing-school of the famous Battistini at Naples, and that he was going to punish his insolence. Conte M — —’s anger having at length reappeared, he fought with a certain determination, which did not however prevent Fabrizio from giving him a very pretty thrust in the chest with his sword, which kept him in bed for several months. Lodovico, while giving first aid to the wounded man, whispered in his ear: “If you report this duel to the police, I will have you stabbed in your bed.”

Fabrizio withdrew to Florence; as he had remained in hiding at Bologna, it was only at Florence that he received all the Duchessa’s letters of reproach; she could not forgive his having come to her concert and made no attempt to speak to her. Fabrizio was delighted by Conte Mosca’s letters; they breathed a sincere friendship and the most noble sentiments. He gathered that the Conte had written to Bologna, in such a way as to clear him of any suspicion

which might attach to him as a result of the duel. The police behaved with perfect justice: they reported that two strangers, of whom one only, the wounded man, was known to them (namely Conte M —— —), had fought with swords, in front of more than thirty contadini, among whom there had arrived towards the end of the fight the curate of the village, who had made vain efforts to separate the combatants. As the name of Giuseppe Bossi had never been mentioned, less than two months afterwards Fabrizio returned to Bologna, more convinced than ever that his destiny condemned him never to know the noble and intellectual side of love. So much he gave himself the pleasure of explaining at great length to the Duchessa; he was thoroughly tired of his solitary life and now felt a passionate desire to return to those charming evenings which he used to pass with the Conte and his aunt. Since then he had never tasted the delights of good society. “I am so bored with the thought of the love which I sought to give myself, and of Fausta,” he wrote to the Duchessa, “that now, even if her fancy were still to favour me, I would not go twenty leagues to hold her to her promise; so have no fear, as you tell me you have, of my going to Paris, where I see that she has now made her appearance and has created a furore. I would travel all the leagues in the world to spend an evening with you and with that Conte who is so good to his friends.”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

While Fabrizio was in pursuit of love, in a village near Parma, the Fiscal General Rassi, who did not know that he was so near, continued to treat his case as though he had been a Liberal: he pretended to be unable to find — or, rather, he intimidated — the witnesses for the defence; and finally, after the most ingenious operations, carried on for nearly a year, and about two months after Fabrizio's final return to Bologna, on a certain Friday, the Marchesa Raversi, mad with joy, announced publicly in her drawing-room that next day the sentence which had just been pronounced, in the last hour, on young del Dongo would be presented to the Prince for his signature and approved by him. A few minutes later the Duchessa was informed of this utterance by her enemy.

"The Conte must be extremely ill served by his agents!" she said to herself; "only this morning he thought that the sentence could not be passed for another week. Perhaps he would not be sorry to see my young Grand Vicar kept out of Parma; but," she added, breaking into song, "we shall see him come again; and one day he will be our Archbishop. The Duchessa rang:

"Collect all the servants in the waiting-room," she told her footman, "including the kitchen staff; go to the town commandant and get the necessary permit to procure four post-horses, and have those horses harnessed to my landau within half an hour." All the women of the household were set to work packing trunks: the Duchessa hastily chose a travelling dress, all without sending any word to the Conte; the idea of playing a little joke on him sent her into a transport of joy.

"My friends," she said to the assembled servants, "I learn that my poor nephew is to be condemned in his absence for having had the audacity to defend his life against a raging madman; I mean Giletti, who was trying to kill him. You have all of you had opportunities of seeing how mild and inoffensive Fabrizio's nature is. Rightly indignant at this atrocious outrage, I am going to Florence; I leave for each of you ten years' wages; if you are in

distress, write to me, and, so long as I have a sequin, there will be something for you."

The Duchessa meant exactly what she said, and, at her closing words, the servants dissolved in tears; her eyes too were moist: she added in a voice faint with emotion: "Pray to God for me and for Monsignor Fabrizio del Dongo, First Grand Vicar of the Diocese, who tomorrow morning is going to be condemned to the galleys, or, which would be less stupid, to the penalty of death."

The tears of the servants flowed in double volume, and gradually changed into cries that were almost seditious; the Duchessa stepped into her carriage and drove to the Prince's Palace. Despite the unusual hour, she sent in a request for an audience by General Fontana, the Aide-de-Camp in waiting; she was by no means in court dress, a fact which threw this Aide-deCamp into a profound stupor. As for the Prince, he was not at all surprised, still less annoyed by this request for an audience. "We shall see tears flowing from fine eyes," he said to himself, rubbing his hands. "She comes to sue for pardon; at last that proud beauty is going to humble herself! She was, really, too insupportable with her little airs of independence! Those speaking eyes seemed always to be saying to me, when the slightest thing offended her: 'Naples or Milan would have very different attractions as a residence from your little town of Parma.' In truth, I do not reign over Naples, nor over Milan; but now at last this great lady is coming to ask me for something which depends upon me alone, and which she is burning to obtain; I always thought that nephew's coming here would bring me some advantage."

While the Prince was smiling at these thoughts, and giving himself up to all these agreeable anticipations, he walked up and down his cabinet, at the door of which General Fontana remained standing stiff and erect like a soldier presenting arms. Seeing the sparkling eyes of the Prince, and remembering the Duchessa's travelling dress, he imagined a dissolution of the Monarchy. His bewilderment knew no bounds when he heard the Prince say: "Ask the Signora Duchessa to wait for a quarter of an hour." The General Aide-deCamp made his half-turn, like a soldier on parade; the Prince was still smiling: "Fontana is not accustomed," he said to himself, "to see that proud Duchessa kept waiting. The face of astonishment with which he is going to tell her about the quarter of an hour to wait will pave the way for the

touching tears which this cabinet is going to see her shed." This quarter of an hour was exquisite for the Prince; he walked up and down with a firm and steady pace; he reigned. "It will not do at this point to say anything that is not perfectly correct; whatever my feelings for the Duchessa may be, I must never forget that she is one of the greatest ladies of my court. How used Louis XIV to speak to the Princesses, his daughters, when he had occasion to be displeased with them?" And his eyes came to rest on the portrait of the Great King.

The amusing thing was that the Prince never thought of asking himself whether he should shew clemency to Fabrizio, or what form that clemency should take. Finally, at the end of twenty minutes, the faithful Fontana presented himself again at the door, but without saying a word. "The Duchessa Sanseverina may enter," cried the Prince, with a theatrical air. "Now for the tears," he added inwardly, and, as though to prepare himself for such a spectacle, took out his handkerchief.

Never had the Duchessa been so gay or so pretty; she did not seem five and twenty. Seeing her light and rapid little step scarcely brush the carpet, the poor Aide-deCamp was on the point of losing his reason altogether.

"I have a thousand pardons to ask of Your Serene Highness," said the Duchessa in her light and gay little voice; "I have taken the liberty of presenting myself before him in a costume which is not exactly conventional, but Your Highness has so accustomed me to his kindnesses that I have ventured to hope that he will be pleased to accord me this pardon also."

The Duchessa spoke quite slowly so as to give herself time to enjoy the spectacle of the Prince's face; it was delicious, by reason of the profound astonishment and of the traces of the grand manner which the position of his head and arms still betrayed. The Prince sat as though struck by a thunderbolt; in a shrill and troubled little voice he exclaimed from time to time, barely articulating the words: "What's that.' What's that!" The Duchessa, as though out of respect, having ended her compliment, left him ample time to reply; then went on:

“I venture to hope that Your Serene Highness deigns to pardon me the incongruity of my costume”; but, as she said the words, her mocking eyes shone with so bright a sparkle that the Prince could not endure it; he studied the ceiling, an act which with him was the final sign of the most extreme embarrassment.

“What’s that! What’s that!” he said again; then he had the good fortune to hit upon a phrase:—”Signora Duchessa, pray be seated”; he himself drew forward a chair for her, not ungraciously. The Duchess was by no means insensible to this courtesy; she moderated the petulance of her gaze.

“What’s that! What’s that!” the Prince once more repeated, moving uneasily in his chair, in which one would have said that he could find no solid support.

“I am going to take advantage of the cool night air to travel by post,” went on the Duchessa, “and as my absence may be of some duration, I have not wished to leave the States of His Serene Highness without thanking him for all the kindnesses which, in the last five years, he has deigned to shew me.” At these words the Prince at last understood; he grew pale; he was the one man in the world who really suffered when he saw himself proved wrong in his calculations. Then he assumed an air of grandeur quite worthy of the portrait of Louis XIV which hung before his eyes. “Very good,” thought the Duchessa, “there is a man.”

“And what is the reason for this sudden departure?” said the Prince in a fairly firm tone.

“I have long had the plan in my mind,” replied the Duchessa, “and a little insult which has been offered to Monsignor del Dongo, whom tomorrow they are going to sentence to death or to the galleys, makes me hasten my departure.”

“And to what town are you going?”

“To Naples, I think.” She added as she rose to her feet: “It only remains for me to take leave of Your Serene Highness and to thank him most humbly for his former kindnesses.” She, in turn, spoke with so firm an air that the Prince

saw that in two minutes all would be over; once the sensation of her departure had occurred, he knew that no further arrangement was possible; she was not a woman to retrace her steps. He ran after her.

“But you know well, Signora Duchessa,” he said, taking her hand, “that I have always felt a regard for you, a regard to which it rested only with you to give another name. A murder has been committed; that is a fact which no one can deny; I have entrusted the sifting of the evidence to my best judges. . . .”

At these words the Duchessa rose to her full height; every sign of respect and even of urbanity disappeared in the twinkling of an eye; the outraged woman became clearly apparent, and the outraged woman addressing a creature whom she knew to have broken faith with her. It was with an expression of the most violent anger, and indeed of contempt that she said to the Prince, dwelling on every word:

“I am leaving the States of Your Serene Highness for ever, so as never to hear the names of the Fiscal Rassi and of the other infamous assassins who have condemned my nephew and so many others to death; if Your Serene Highness does not wish to introduce a feeling of bitterness into the last moments that I shall pass in the presence of a Prince who is courteous and intelligent when he is not led astray, I beg him most humbly not to recall to me the thought of those infamous judges who sell themselves for a thousand scudi or a Cross.”

The admirable — and, above all, genuine — accent in which these words were uttered made the Prince shudder; he feared for a moment to see his dignity compromised by an accusation even more direct, but on the whole his sensation soon became one of pleasure; he admired the Duchessa; her face and figure attained at that moment to a sublime beauty. “Great God! How beautiful she is!” the Prince said to himself; “one ought to make some concessions to a woman who is so unique, when there probably is not another like her in the whole of Italy. Oh well, with a little policy it might not be impossible one day to make her my mistress: there is a wide gulf between a creature like this and that doll of a Marchesa Balbi, who moreover robs my poor subjects of at least three hundred thousand francs every year. . . . but did I hear aright?” he thought suddenly; “she said: ‘condemned my

nephew and so many others.' " Then his anger boiled over, and it was with a stiffness worthy of his supreme rank that the Prince said, after an interval of silence: "And what would one have to do to make the Signora not leave us?"

"Something of which you are not capable," replied the Duchessa in an accent of the most bitter irony and the most unconcealed contempt.

The Prince was beside himself, but his professional training as an Absolute Sovereign gave him the strength to overcome his first impulse. "I must have this woman," he said to himself; "so much I owe to myself, then she must be made to die of shame. . . . If she leaves this cabinet, I shall never see her again." But, mad with rage and hatred as he was at this moment, where was he to find an answer that would at once satisfy the requirements of what he owed to himself and induce the Duchessa not to abandon his court immediately? "She cannot," he said to himself, "repeat or turn to ridicule a gesture," and he placed himself between the Duchessa and the door of his cabinet. Presently he heard a tap at this door.

"Who is the creature," he cried, shouting with the full force of his lungs, "who is the creature who comes here to thrust his fatuous presence upon me?" Poor General Fontana shewed a pallid face, of complete discomfiture, and it was with the air of a man in his last agony that he stammered these inarticulate words: "His Excellency the Conte Mosca solicits the honour of being introduced."

"Let him come in," said, or rather shouted, the Prince, and, as Mosca bowed:

"Well," he said to him, "here is the Signora Duchessa Sanseverina, who informs me that she is leaving Parma immediately to go and settle at Naples, and who, incidentally, is being most impertinent to me."

"What!" said Mosca turning pale.

"Oh! So you did not know of this plan of departure?"

"Not a word; I left the Signora at six o'clock, happy and content."

This statement had an incredible effect on the Prince. First of all he looked at Mosca; his increasing pallor shewed the Prince that he was telling the truth

and was in no way an accomplice of the Duchessa's desperate action. "In that case," he said to himself, "I lose her for ever; pleasure and vengeance, all goes in a flash. At Naples she will make epigrams with her nephew Fabrizio about the great fury of the little Prince of Parma." He looked at the Duchessa: the most violent scorn and anger were disputing the possession of her heart; her eyes were fixed at that moment on Conte Mosca, and the exquisite curves of that lovely mouth expressed the bitterest disdain. The whole face seemed to be saying: "Vile courtier!" "So," thought the Prince after he had examined her, "I lose this means of bringing her back ':> my country. At this moment again, if she leaves this cabinet, she is lost to me; God knows the things she will say about my judges at Naples. . . . And with that spirit, and that divine power of persuasion which heaven has bestowed on her, she will make everyone believe her. I shall be obliged to her for the reputation of a ridiculous tyrant, who gets up in the middle of the night to look under his bed. . . . " Then, by an adroit move and as though he were intending to walk up and down the room to reduce his agitation, the Prince took his stand once again in front of the door of the cabinet; the Conte was on his right, at a distance of three paces, pale, shattered, and trembling so that he was obliged to seek support from the back of the armchair in which the Duchessa had been sitting during the earlier part of the audience, and which the Prince in a moment of anger had pushed across the floor. The Conte was in love. "If the Duchessa goes, I follow her," he said to himself; "but will she want me in her train? That is the question."

On the Prince's left, the Duchessa, erect, her arms folded and pressed to her bosom, was looking at him with an admirable impatience: a complete and intense pallor had taken the place of the vivid colours which a moment earlier animated that sublime face.

The Prince, in contrast to the other two occupants of the room, had a red face and a troubled air; his left hand played convulsively with the Cross attached to the Grand Cordon of his Order which he wore under his coat: with his right hand he caressed his chin.

"What is to be done?" he asked the Conte, without knowing quite what he himself was doing, and carried away by the habit of consulting this other in everything.

“I can think of nothing, truly, Serene Highness,” replied the Conte with the air of a man yielding up his last breath. It was all he could do to pronounce the words of his answer. The tone of his voice gave the Prince the first consolation that his wounded pride had received during this audience, and this grain of happiness furnished him with a speech that gratified his vanity.

“Very well,” he said, “I am the most reasonable of the three; I choose to make a complete elimination of my position in the world. I am going to speak as a friend”; and he added, with a fine smile of condescension, beautifully copied from the brave days of Louis XIV, “like a friend speaking to friends. Signora Duchessa,” he went on, “what is to be done to make you forget an untimely resolution?”

“Truly, I can think of nothing,” replied the Duchessa with a deep sigh, “truly, I can think of nothing, I have such a horror of Parma.” There was no epigrammatic intention in this speech; one could see that sincerity itself spoke through her lips.

The Conte turned sharply towards her; his courtier’s soul was scandalised; then he addressed a suppliant gaze to the Prince. With great dignity and coolness the Prince allowed a moment to pass; then, addressing the Conte:

“I see,” he said, “that your charming friend is altogether beside herself; it is quite simple, she adores her nephew.” And, turning towards the Duchessa, he went on with a glance of the utmost gallantry and at the same time with the air which one adopts when quoting a line from a play: “What must one do to please those lovely eyes?”

The Duchessa had had time for reflexion; in a firm and measured tone, and as though she were dictating her ultimatum, she replied:

“His Highness might write me a gracious letter, as he knows so well how to do; he might say to me that, not being at all convinced of the guilt of Fabrizio del Dongo, First Grand Vicar of the Archbishop, he will not sign the sentence when it is laid before him, and that these unjust proceedings shall have no consequences in the future.”

“What, unjust!” cried the Prince, colouring to the whites of his eyes, and recovering his anger.

“That is not all,” replied the Duchessa, with a Roman pride, “this very evening, and,’’ she added, looking at the clock, “it is already a quarter past eleven, this very evening His Serene Highness will send word to the Marchesa Raversi that he advises her to retire to the country to recover from the fatigue which must have been caused her by a certain prosecution of which she was speaking in her drawing-room in the early hours of the evening.” The Prince was pacing the floor of his cabinet like a madman.

“Did anyone ever see such a woman?” he cried. “She is wanting in respect for me!”

The Duchessa replied with inimitable grace: “Never in my life have I had a thought of shewing want of respect for His Serene Highness; His Highness has had the extreme condescension to say that he was speaking as a friend to friends. I have, moreover, no desire to remain at Parma,” she added, looking at the Conte with the utmost contempt. This look decided the Prince, hitherto highly uncertain, though his words had seemed to promise a pledge; he paid little attention to words.

There was still some further discussion; but at length Conte Mosca received the order to write the gracious note solicited by the Duchessa. He omitted the phrase: these unjust proceedings shall have no consequences in the future. “It is enough,” the Conte said to himself, “that the Prince shall promise not to sign the sentence which will be laid before him.” The Prince thanked him with a quick glance as he signed.

The Conte was greatly mistaken; the Prince was tired and would have signed anything. He thought that he was getting well out of the difficulty, and the whole affair was coloured in his eyes by the thought: “If the Duchessa goes, I shall find my court become boring within a week.” The Conte noticed that his master altered the date to that of the following day. He looked at the clock: it pointed almost to midnight. The Minister saw nothing more in this correction of the date than a pedantic desire to show a proof of exactitude and good government. As for the banishment of the Marchesa Raversi, he made no objection; the Prince took a particular delight in banishing people.

“General Fontana!” he cried, opening the door a little way.

The General appeared with a face shewing so much astonishment and curiosity, that a merry glance was exchanged by the Duchessa and Conte, and this glance made peace between them.

“General Fontana,” said the Prince, “you will get into my carriage, which is waiting under the colonnade; you will go to the Marchesa Raversi’s, you will send in your name; if she is in bed, you will add that you come from me, and, on entering her room, you will say these precise words and no others: ‘Signora Marchesa Raversi, His Serene Highness requests you to leave tomorrow morning, before eight o’clock, for your castello at Velleja; His Highness will let you know when you may return to Parma.’”

The Prince’s eyes sought those of the Duchessa, who, without giving him the thanks he expected, made him an extremely respectful curtsey, and swiftly left the room.

“What a woman!” said the Prince, turning to Conte Mosca.

The latter, delighted at the banishment of the Marchesa Raversi, which simplified all his ministerial activities, talked for a full half-hour like a consummate courtier; he sought to console his Sovereign’s injured vanity, and did not take his leave until he saw him fully convinced that the historical anecdotes of Louis XIV included no fairer page than that with which he had just provided his own future historians.

On reaching home the Duchessa shut her doors, and gave orders that no one was to be admitted, not even the Conte. She wished to be left alone with herself, and to consider for a little what idea she ought to form of the scene that had just occurred. She had acted at random and for her own immediate pleasure; but to whatever course she might have let herself be induced to take she would have clung with tenacity. She had not blamed herself in the least on recovering her coolness, still less had she repented; such was the character to which she owed the position of being still, in her thirty-seventh year, the best-looking woman at court.

She was thinking at this moment of what Parma might have to offer in the way of attractions, as she might have done on returning after a long journey, so fully, between nine o'clock and eleven, had she believed that she was leaving the place for ever.

"That poor Conte did cut a ludicrous figure when he learned of my departure in the Prince's presence. . . . After all, he is a pleasant man, and has a very rare warmth of heart. He would have given up his Ministries to follow me. . . . But on the other hand, during five whole years, he has not had to find fault with me for a single aberration. How many women married before the altar could say as much to their lords and masters? It must be admitted that he is not self-important, he is no pedant; he gives one no desire to be unfaithful to him; when he is with me, he seems always to be ashamed of his power. . . . He cut a funny figure in the presence of his lord and master; if he was in the room now, I should kiss him. . . . But not for anything in the world would I undertake to amuse a Minister who had lost his portfolio; that is a malady which only death can cure, and . . . one which kills. What a misfortune it would be to become Minister when one was young! I must write to him; it is one of the things that he ought to know officially before he quarrels with his Prince. . . . But I am forgetting my good servants."

The Duchessa rang. Her women were still at work packing trunks; the carriage had drawn up under the portico, and was being loaded; all the servants who had nothing else to do were gathered round this carriage, with tears in their eyes. Cecchina, who on great occasions had the sole right to enter the Duchessa's room, told her all these details.

"Call them upstairs," said the Duchessa.

A moment later she passed into the waiting-room.

"I have been promised," she told them, "that the sentence passed on my nephew will not be signed by the Sovereign" (such is the term used in Italy), "and I am postponing my departure. We shall see whether my enemies have enough influence to alter this decision."

After a brief silence, the servants began to shout: "Evviva la Signora Duchessa!" and to applaud furiously. The Duchessa, who had gone into the

next room, reappeared like an actress taking a call, made a little curtsey, full of grace, to her people, and said to them: “My friends, I thank you.” Had she said the word, all of them at that moment would have marched on the Palace to attack it. She beckoned to a postilion, an old smuggler and a devoted servant, who followed her.

“You will disguise yourself as a contadino in easy circumstances, you will get out of Parma as best you can, hire a sediola and proceed as quickly as possible to Bologna. You will enter Bologna as a casual visitor and by the Florence gate, and you will deliver to Fabrizio, who is at the Pellegrino, a packet which Cecchina will give you. Fabrizio is in hiding, and is known there as Signor Giuseppe Bossi; do not give him away by any stupid action, do not appear to know him; my enemies will perhaps set spies on your track. Fabrizio will send you back here after a few hours or a few days: and it is on your return journey especially that you must use every precaution not to give him away.”

“Ah! Marchesa Raversi’s people!” cried the postilion. “We are on the look-out for them, and if the Signora wished, they would soon be exterminated.”

“Some other day, perhaps; but don’t, as you value your life, do anything without orders from me.”

It was a copy of the Prince’s note which the Duchessa wished to send to Fabrizio; she could not resist the pleasure of making him amused, and added a word about the scene which had led up to the note; this word became a letter of ten pages. She had the postilion called back.

“You cannot start,” she told him, “before four o’clock, when the gates are opened.”

“I was thinking of going out by the big conduit; I should be up to my neck in water, but I should get through. . . .”

“No,” said the Duchessa, “I do not wish to expose one of my most faithful servants to the risk of fever. Do you know anyone in the Archbishop’s household?”

“The second coachman is a friend of mine.”

“Here is a letter for that saintly prelate; make your way quietly into his Palace, get them to take you to his valet; I do not wish Monsignore to be awakened. If he has retired to his room, spend the night in the Palace, and, as he is in the habit of rising at dawn, tomorrow morning, at four o’clock, have yourself announced as coming from me, ask the holy Archbishop for his blessing, hand him the packet you see here, and take the letters that he will perhaps give you for Bologna.”

The Duchessa addressed to the Archbishop the actual original of the Prince’s note; as this note concerned his First Grand Vicar, she begged him to deposit it among the archives of the Palace, where she hoped that their Reverences the Grand Vicars and Canons, her nephew’s colleagues, would be so good as to acquaint themselves with its contents; the whole transaction to be kept in the most profound secrecy.

The Duchessa wrote to Monsignor Landriani with a familiarity which could not fail to charm that honest plebeian; the signature alone filled three lines; the letter, couched in the most friendly tone, was followed by the words: Angelina–Cornelia-Isotta Valserra del Dongo, Duchessa Sanseverina.

“I don’t believe I have signed all that,” the Duchessa said to herself, “since my marriage contract with the poor Duca; but one only gets hold of those people with that sort of thing, and in the eyes of the middle classes the caricature looks like beauty.” She could not bring the evening to an end without yielding to the temptation to write to the poor Conte; she announced to him officially, for his guidance, she said, in his relations with crowned heads, that she did not feel herself to be capable of amusing a Minister in disgrace. “The Prince frightens you; when you are no longer in a position to see him, will it be my business to frighten you?” She had this letter taken to him at once.

For his part, that morning at seven o’clock, the Prince sent for Conte Zurla, the Minister of the Interior.

“Repeat,” he told him, “the strictest orders to every podestà to have Signor Fabrizio del Dongo arrested. We are informed that possibly he may dare to reappear in our States. This fugitive being now at Bologna, where he seems to defy the judgement of our tribunals, post the sbirri who know him by

sight: (1) in the villages on the road from Bologna to Parma; (2) in the neighbourhood of Duchessa Sanseverina's castello at Sacca, and of her house at Castelnuovo; (3) round Conte Mosca's castello. I venture to hope from your great sagacity, Signor Conte, that you will manage to keep all knowledge of these, your Sovereign's orders, from the curiosity of Conte Mosca. Understand that I wish Signor Fabrizio del Dongo to be arrested."

As soon as the Minister had left him, a secret door introduced into the Prince's presence the Fiscal General, Rassi, who came towards him bent double, and bowing at every step. The face of this rascal was a picture; it did full justice to the infamy of the part he had to play, and, while the rapid and extravagant movements of his eyes betrayed his consciousness of his own merits, the arrogant and grimacing assurance of his mouth showed that he knew how to fight against contempt.

As this personage is going to acquire a considerable influence over Fabrizio's destiny, we may say a word here about him. He was tall, he had fine eyes that shewed great intelligence, but a face ruined by smallpox; as for brains, he had them in plenty, and of the finest quality; it was admitted that he had an exhaustive knowledge of the law, but it was in the quality of resource that he specially shone. Whatever the aspect in which a case might be laid before him, he easily and in a few moments discovered the way, thoroughly well founded in law, to arrive at a conviction or an acquittal; he was above all a past-master of the hair-splittings of a prosecutor.

In this man, whom great Monarchs might have envied the Prince of Parma, one passion only was known to exist: he loved to converse with eminent personages and to please them by buffooneries. It mattered little to him whether the powerful personage laughed at what he said or at his person, or uttered revolting pleasantries at the expense of Signora Rassi; provided that he saw the great man laugh and was himself treated as a familiar, he was content. Sometimes the Prince, at a loss how further to insult the dignity of this Chief Justice, would actually kick him; if the kicks hurt him, he would begin to cry. But the instinct of buffoonery was so strong in him that he might be seen every day frequenting the drawing-room of a Minister who scoffed at him, in preference to his own drawing-room where he exercised a despotic rule over all the stuff gowns of the place. This Rassi had above all created for himself a place apart, in that it was impossible for the most

insolent noble to humiliate him; his method of avenging himself for the insults which he had to endure all day long was to relate them to the Prince, in whose presence he had acquired the privilege of saying anything; it is true that the reply often took the form of a well-directed cuff, which hurt him, but he stood on no ceremony about that. The presence of this Chief Justice used to distract the Prince in his moments of ill-humour; then he amused himself by outraging him. It can be seen that Rassi was almost the perfect courtier: a man without honour and without humour.

“Secrecy is essential above all things,” the Prince shouted to him without greeting him, treating him, in fact, exactly as he would have treated a scullion, he who was so polite to everybody. “From when is your sentence dated?”

“Serene Highness, from yesterday morning.”

“By how many judges is it signed?”

“By all five.”

“And the penalty?”

“Twenty years in a fortress, as Your Serene Highness told me.”

“The death penalty would have given offence,” said the Prince, as though speaking to himself; “it is a pity! What an effect on that woman! But he is a del Dongo, and that name is revered in Parma, on account of the three Archbishops, almost in direct sequence. . . . You say twenty years in a fortress?”

“Yes, Serene Highness,” replied the Fiscal, still on his feet and bent double; “with, as a preliminary, a public apology before His Serene Highness’s portrait; and, in addition, a diet of bread and water every Friday and on the Vigils of the principal Feasts, the accused being notorious for his impiety. This is with an eye to the future and to put a stop to his career.”

“Write,” said the Prince: “‘His Serene Highness having deigned to turn a considerate ear to the most humble supplications of the Marchesa del Dongo, the culprit’s mother, and of the Duchessa Sanseverina, his aunt, which ladies

have represented to him that at the date of the crime their son and nephew was extremely young, and in addition led astray by an insensate passion conceived for the wife of the unfortunate Giletti, has been graciously pleased, notwithstanding the horror inspired by such a murder, to commute the penalty to which Fabrizio del Dongo has been sentenced to that of twelve years in a fortress.'

"Give it to me to sign."

The Prince signed and dated the sentence from the previous day; then, handing it back to Rassi, said to him: "Write immediately beneath my signature: 'The Duchessa Sanseverina having once again thrown herself before the knees of His Highness, the Prince has given permission that every Thursday the prisoner may take exercise for one hour on the platform of the square tower, commonly called Torre Farnese.'

"Sign that," said the Prince, "and, don't forget, keep your mouth shut, whatever you may hear said in the town. You will tell Councillor De' Capitani, who voted for two years in a fortress, and even made a speech upholding so ridiculous a sentence, that I expect him to refresh his memory of the laws and regulations. Once again silence, and good night." Fiscal Rassi performed with great deliberation three profound reverences to which the Prince paid no attention.

This happened at seven o'clock in the morning. A few hours later, the news of the Marchesa Raversi's banishment spread through the town and among the caffè: everyone was talking at once of this great event. The Marchesa's banishment drove away for some time from Parma that implacable enemy of small towns and small courts, boredom. General Fabio Conti, who had regarded himself as a Minister already, feigned an attack of gout, and for several days did not emerge from his fortress. The middle classes, and consequently the populace, concluded from what was happening that it was clear that the Prince had decided to confer the Archbishopric of Parma on Monsignor del Dongo. The shrewd politicians of the caffè went so far as to assert that Father Landriani, the reigning Archbishop, had been ordered to plead ill health and to send in his resignation; he was to be awarded a fat pension from the tobacco duty, they were positive about it; this report reached the Archbishop himself, who was greatly alarmed, and for several

days his zeal for our hero was considerably paralysed. Two months later, this fine piece of news found its way into the Paris newspapers, with the slight alteration that it was Conte Mosca, nephew of the Duchessa Sanseverina, who was to be made Archbishop.

The Marchesa Raversi meanwhile was raging in her Castello di Velleja; she was by no means one of those little feather-pated women who think that they are avenging themselves when they say damaging things about their enemies. On the day following her disgrace, Cavaliere Riscara and three more of her friends presented themselves before the Prince by her order, and asked him for permission to go to visit her at her castello. His Highness received these gentlemen with perfect grace, and their arrival at Velleja was a great consolation to the Marchesa. Before the end of the second week, she had thirty people in her castello, all those whom the Liberal Ministry was going to bring into power. Every evening, the Marchesa held a regular council with the better informed of her friends. One day, on which she had received a number of letters from Parma and Bologna, she retired to bed early: her maid let into the room, first of all the reigning lover, Conte Baldi, a young man of admirable appearance and complete insignificance, and, later on, Cavaliere Riscara, his predecessor: this was a small man dark in complexion and in character, who, having begun by being instructor in geometry at the College of Nobles at Parma, now found himself a Councillor of State and a Knight of several Orders.

“I have the good habit,” the Marchesa said to these two men, “of never destroying any paper; and well it has served me; here are nine letters which the Sanseverina has written me on different occasions. You will both of you proceed to Genoa, you will look among the gaol-birds there for an ex-lawyer named Burati, like the great Venetian poet, or else Durati. You, Conte Baldi, sit down at my desk and write what I am going to dictate to you.

“‘An idea has occurred to me, and I write you a line. I am going to my cottage, by Castelnuovo; if you care to come over and spend a day with me, I shall be most delighted; there is, it seems to me, no great danger after what has just happened; the clouds are lifting. However, stop before you come to Castelnuovo; you will find one of my people on the road; they are all madly devoted to you. You will, of course, keep the name Bossi for this little expedition. They tell me that you have grown a beard like the most perfect

Capuchin, and nobody has seen you at Parma except with the decent countenance of a Grand Vicar.'

"Do you follow me, Riscara?"

"Perfectly; but the journey to Genoa is an unnecessary extravagance; I know a man in Parma who, to be accurate, is not yet in the galleys, but cannot fail to get there in the end. He will counterfeit the Sanseverina's hand to perfection."

At these words, Conte Baldi opened those fine eyes of his to their full extent; he had only just understood.

"If you know this worthy personage of Parma, who, you hope, will obtain advancement," said the Marchesa to Riscara, "presumably he knows you also: his mistress, his confessor, his bosom friend may have been bought by the Sanseverina: I should prefer to postpone this little joke for a few days and not to expose myself to any risk. Start in a couple of hours like good little lambs, don't see a living soul at Genoa, and return quickly." Cavaliere Riscara fled from the room laughing, and squeaking through his nose like Punchinello. "We must pack up our traps!" he said as he ran in a burlesque fashion. He wished to leave Baldi alone with the lady. Five days later, Riscara brought the Marchesa back her Conte Baldi, flayed alive; to cut off six leagues, they had made him cross a mountain on mule-back; he vowed that nothing would ever induce him again to take long journeys. Baldi handed the Marchesa three copies of the letter which she had dictated to him, and five or six other letters in the same hand, composed by Riscara, which might perhaps be put to some use later on. One of these letters contained some very pretty witticisms with regard to the fears from which the Prince suffered at night, and to the deplorable thinness of the Marchesa Balbi, his mistress, who left a dint in the sofa-cushions, it was said, like the mark made by a pair of tongs, after she had sat on them for a moment. Anyone would have sworn that all these letters came from the hand of Signora Sanseverina.

"Now I know, beyond any doubt," said the Marchesa, "that the favoured lover, Fabrizio, is at Bologna or in the immediate neighbourhood. . . ."

“I am too unwell,” cried Conte Baldi, interrupting her; “I ask as a favour to be excused this second journey, or at least I should like to have a few days’ rest to recover my health.”

“I shall go and plead your cause,” said Riscara.

He rose and spoke in an undertone to the Marchesa.

“Oh, very well, then, I consent,” she replied with a smile. “Reassure yourself, you shall not go at all,” she told Baldi, with a certain air of contempt.

“Thank you,” he cried in heart-felt accents. In the end, Riscara got into a post-chaise by himself. He had scarcely been a couple of days in Bologna when he saw, in an open carriage, Fabrizio and little Marietta. “The devil!” he said to himself, “it seems our future Archbishop doesn’t let the time hang on his hands; we must let the Duchessa know about this, she will be charmed.” Riscara had only to follow Fabrizio to discover his address; next morning our hero received from a courier the letter forged at Genoa; he thought it a trifle short, but apart from that suspected nothing. The thought of seeing the Duchessa and Conte again made him wild with joy, and in spite of anything Lodovico might say he took a post-horse and went off at a gallop. Without knowing it, he was followed at a short distance by Cavaliere Riscara, who on coming to a point six leagues from Parma, at the stage before Castelnuovo, had the satisfaction of seeing a crowd on the piazza outside the local prison; they had just led in our hero, recognised at the post-house, as he was changing horses, by two sbirri who had been selected and sent there by Conte Zurla.

Cavaliere Riscara’s little eyes sparkled with joy; he informed himself, with exemplary patience, of everything that had occurred in the little village, then sent a courier to the Marchesa Raversi. After which, roaming the streets as though to visit the church, which was of great interest, and then to look for a picture by the Parmigianino which, he had been told, was to be found in the place, he finally ran into the podestà, who was obsequious in paying his respects to a Councillor of State. Riscara appeared surprised that he had not immediately despatched to the citadel of Parma the conspirator whose arrest he had had the good fortune to secure.

“There is reason to fear,” Riscara added in an indifferent tone, “that his many friends, who were endeavouring, the day before yesterday, to facilitate his passage through the States of His Highness, may come into conflict with the police; there were at least twelve or fifteen of these rebels, mounted.”

“Intelligenti pauca!” cried the podestà with a cunning air.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A couple of hours later, the unfortunate Fabrizio, fitted with handcuffs and actually attached by a long chain

to the sediola into which he had been made to climb, started for the citadel of Parma, escorted by eight constables. These had orders to take with them all the constables stationed in the villages through which the procession had to pass; the podestà in person followed this important prisoner. About seven o'clock in the evening the sediola, escorted by all the little boys in Parma and by thirty constables, came down the fine avenue of trees, passed in front of the little palazzo in which Fausta had been living a few months earlier, and finally presented itself at the outer gate of the citadel just as General Fabio Conti and his daughter were coming out. The governor's carriage stopped before reaching the drawbridge to make way for the sediola to which Fabrizio was attached; the General instantly shouted for the gates to be shut, and hastened down to the turnkey's office to see what was the matter; he was not a little surprised when he recognised the prisoner, who had grown quite stiff after being fastened to his sediola throughout such a long journey; four constables had lifted him down and were carrying him into the turnkey's office. "So I have in my power," thought the feather-pated governor, "that famous Fabrizio del Dongo, with whom anyone would say that for the last year the high society of Parma had taken a vow to occupy themselves exclusively!"

The General had met him a score of times at court, at the Duchessa's and elsewhere; but he took good care not to shew any sign that he knew him; he was afraid of compromising himself.

"Have a report made out," he called to the prison clerk, "in full detail of the surrender made to me of the prisoner by his worship the podestà of Castelnuovo."

Barbone, the clerk, a terrifying personage owing to the volume of his beard and his martial bearing, assumed an air of even greater importance than

usual; one would have called him a German gaoler. Thinking he knew that it was chiefly the Duchessa Sansevérina who had prevented his master from becoming Minister of War, he was behaving with more than his ordinary insolence towards the prisoner; in speaking to him he used the pronoun voi, which in Italy is the formula used in addressing servants.

“I am a prelate of the Holy Roman Church,” Fabrizio said to him firmly, “and Grand Vicar of this Diocese; my birth alone entitles me to respect.”

“I know nothing about that!” replied the clerk pertly; “prove your assertions by shewing the brevets which give you a right to those highly respectable titles.”

Fabrizio had no such documents and did not answer. General Fabio Conti, standing by the side of his clerk, watched him write without raising his eyes to the prisoner, so as not to be obliged to admit that he was really Fabrizio del Dongo.

Suddenly Clelia Conti, who was waiting in the carriage, heard a tremendous racket in the guard-room. The clerk, Barbone, in making an insolent and extremely long description of the prisoner’s person, ordered him to undo his clothing in order to verify and put on record the number and condition of scars received by him in his fight with Giletti.

“I cannot,” said Fabrizio, smiling bitterly; “I am not in a position to obey the gentleman’s orders, these handcuffs make it impossible.”

“What!” cried the General with an innocent air, “the prisoner is handcuffed! Inside the fortress! That is against the rules, it requires an order ad hoc; take the handcuffs off him.”

Fabrizio looked at him: “There’s a nice Jesuit,” he thought; “for the last hour he has seen me with these handcuffs, which have been hurting me horribly, and he pretends to be surprised!”

The handcuffs were taken off by the constables; they had just learned that Fabrizio was the nephew of the Duchessa Sansevérina, and made haste to shew him a honeyed politeness which formed a sharp contrast to the

rudeness of the clerk; the latter seemed annoyed by this and said to Fabrizio, who stood there without moving:

“Come along, there! Hurry up, shew us those scratches you got from poor Giletti, the time he was murdered.” With a bound, Fabrizio sprang upon the clerk, and dealt him such a blow that Barbone fell from his chair against the General’s legs. The constables seized hold of the arms of Fabrizio, who made no attempt to resist them; the General himself and two constables who were standing by him hastened to pick up the clerk, whose face was bleeding copiously. Two subordinates who stood farther off ran to shut the door of the office, in the idea that the prisoner was trying to escape. The brigadiere who was in command of them thought that young del Dongo could not make a serious attempt at flight, since after all he was in the interior of the citadel; at the same time, he went to the window to put a stop to any disorder, and by a professional instinct. Opposite this open window and within a few feet of it the General’s carriage was drawn up: Clelia had shrunk back inside it, so as not to be a witness of the painful scene that was being enacted in the office; when she heard all this noise, she looked out.

“What is happening?” she asked the brigadiere.

“Signorina, it is young Fabrizio del Dongo who has just given that insolent Barbone a proper smack!”

“What! It is Signor del Dongo that they are taking to prison?”

“Eh! No doubt about that,” said the brigadiere; “it is because of the poor young man’s high birth that they are making all this fuss; I thought the Signorina knew all about it.” Clelia remained at the window: when the constables who were standing round the table moved away a little she caught a glimpse of the prisoner. “Who would ever have said,” she thought, “that I should see him again for the first time in this sad plight, when I met him on the road from the Lake of Como? . . . He gave me his hand to help me into his mother’s carriage. . . . He had the Duchessa with him even then! Had they begun to love each other as long ago as that?”

It should be explained to the reader that the members of the Liberal Party swayed by the Marchesa Raversi and General Conti affected to entertain no

doubt as to the tender intimacy that must exist between Fabrizio and the Duchessa. Conte Mosca, whom they abhorred, was the object of endless pleasantries for the way in which he was being deceived.

“So,” thought Clelia, “there he is a prisoner, and a prisoner in the hands of his enemies. For after all, Conte Mosca, angel as one would like to think him, will be delighted when he hears of this capture.”

A loud burst of laughter sounded from the guard-room.

“Jacopo,” she said to the brigadiere in a voice that quivered with emotion, “what in the world is happening?”

“The General asked the prisoner sharply why he had struck Barbone: Monsignor Fabrizio answered calmly: ‘He called me assassino; let him produce the titles and brevets which authorise him to give me that title’; and they all laughed.”

A gaoler who could write took Barbone’s place; Clelia saw the latter emerge mopping with his handkerchief the blood that streamed in abundance from his hideous face; he was swearing like a heathen: “That f —— Fabrizio,” he shouted at the top of his voice, “I’ll have his life, I will, if I have to steal the hangman’s rope.” He had stopped between the office window and the General’s carriage, and his oaths redoubled.

“Move along there,” the brigadiere told him; “you mustn’t swear in front of the Signorina.”

Barbone raised his head to look at the carriage, his eyes met those of Clelia who could not repress a cry of horror; never had she seen at such close range so atrocious an expression upon any human face. “He will kill Fabrizio!” she said to herself, “I shall have to warn Don Cesare.” This was her uncle, one of the most respected priests in the town; General Conti, his brother, had procured for him the post of economo and principal chaplain in the prison.

The General got into the carriage.

“Would you rather stay at home,” he said to his daughter, “or wait for me, perhaps for some time, in the courtyard of the Palace? I must go and report

all this to the Sovereign."

Fabrizio came out of the office escorted by three constables; they were taking him to the room which had been allotted to him. Clelia looked out of the window, the prisoner was quite close to her. At that moment she answered her father's question in the words: "I will go with you." Fabrizio, hearing these words uttered close to his ear, raised his eyes and met the girl's gaze. He was struck, especially, by the expression of melancholy on her face. "How she has improved," he thought, "since our meeting near Como! What an air of profound thought! . . . They are quite right to compare her with the Duchessa; what angelic features!" Barbone, the bloodstained clerk, who had not taken his stand beside the carriage without a purpose, held up his hand to stop the three constables who were leading Fabrizio away, and, moving round behind the carriage until he reached the window next which the General was sitting:

"As the prisoner has committed an act of violence in the interior of the citadel," he said to him, "in consideration of Article 157 of the regulations, would it not be as well to put the handcuffs on him for three days?"

"Go to the devil!" cried the General, still considerably embarrassed by this arrest. It was important for him that he should not drive either the Duchessa or Conte Mosca to extremes; and besides, what attitude was the Conte going to adopt towards this affair? After all, the murder of a Giletti was a mere trifle, and only intrigue had succeeded in magnifying it into anything of importance.

During this brief dialogue, Fabrizio stood superb among the group of constables, his expression was certainly the proudest and most noble that one could imagine; his fine and delicate features and the contemptuous smile that strayed over his lips made a charming contrast with the coarse appearance of the constables who stood round him. But all this formed, so to speak, only the external part of his physiognomy; he was enraptured by the heavenly beauty of Clelia, and his eyes betrayed his surprise to the full.

She, profoundly pensive, had never thought of drawing back her head from the window; he bowed to her with a half-smile of the utmost respect; then, after a moment's silence:

“It seems to me, Signorina,” he said to her, “that, once before, near a lake, I had the honour of meeting you, in the company of the police.”

Clelia blushed, and was so taken aback that she could find no words in which to reply. “What a noble air among all those coarse creatures,” she had been saying to herself at the moment when Fabrizio spoke to her. The profound pity, we might almost say the tender emotion in which she was plunged deprived her of the presence of mind necessary to find words, no matter what; she became conscious of her silence and blushed all the deeper. At this moment the bolts of the great gate of the citadel were drawn back with a clang; had not His Excellency’s carriage been waiting for at least a minute? The echo was so loud in this vaulted passage that even if Clelia had found something to say in reply Fabrizio could not have caught her words.

Borne away by the horses which had broken into a gallop immediately after crossing the drawbridge, Clelia said to herself: “He must have thought me very silly!” Then suddenly she added: “Not only silly; he must have felt that I had a base nature, he must have thought that I did not respond to his greeting because he is a prisoner and I am the governor’s daughter.”

The thought of such a thing was terrible to this girl of naturally lofty soul. “What makes my behaviour absolutely degrading,” she went on, “is that before, when we met for the first time, also in the company of the police, as he said just now, it was I who was the prisoner, and he did me a service, and helped me out of a very awkward position. . . . Yes, I am bound to admit, my behaviour was quite complete, it combined rudeness and ingratitude. Alas, poor young man! Now that he is in trouble, everybody is going to behave disgracefully to him. Even if he did say to me then: ‘You will remember my name, I hope, at Parma?’ how he must be despising me at this moment! It would have been so easy to say a civil word! Yes, I must admit, my conduct towards him has been atrocious. The other time, but for the generous offer of his mother’s carriage, I should have had to follow the constables on foot through the dust, or, what would have been far worse, ride pillion behind one of them; it was my father then who was under arrest, and I defenceless! Yes, my behaviour is complete. And how keenly a nature like his must have felt it! What a contrast between his noble features and my behaviour! What nobility! What serenity! How like a hero he looked, surrounded by his vile enemies! Now I understand the Duchessa’s passion: if he looks like that in

distressing circumstances which may end in frightful disaster, what must he be like when his heart is happy!"

The governor's carriage waited for more than an hour and a half in the courtyard of the Palace, and yet, when the General returned from his interview with the Prince, Clelia by no means felt that he had stayed there too long.

"What is His Highness's will?" asked Clelia.

"His tongue said: Prison! His eyes: Death!"

"Death! Great God!" exclaimed Clelia.

"There now, be quiet!" said the General crossly; "what a fool I am to answer a child's questions."

Meanwhile Fabrizio was climbing the three hundred and eighty steps which led to the Torre Farnese, a new prison built on the platform of the great tower, at a prodigious height from the ground. He never once thought, distinctly that is to say, of the great change that had just occurred in his fortunes. "What eyes!" he said to himself: "What a wealth of expression in them! What profound pity! She looked as though she were saying: 'Life is such a tangled skein of misfortunes! Do not distress yourself too much about what is happening to you! Are we not sent here below to be unhappy?' How those fine eyes of hers remained fastened on me, even when the horses were moving forward with such a clatter under the arch!"

Fabrizio completely forgot to feel wretched.

Clelia accompanied her father to various houses; in the early part of the evening no one had yet heard the news of the arrest of the great culprit, for such was the name which the courtiers bestowed a couple of hours later on this poor, rash young man.

It was noticed that evening that there was more animation than usual in Clelia's face; whereas animation, the air of taking part in what was going on round her, was just what was chiefly lacking in that charming young person. When you compared her beauty with that of the Duchessa, it was precisely

that air of not being moved by anything, that manner as though of a person superior to everything, which weighed down the balance in her rival's favour. In England, in France, lands of vanity, the general opinion would probably have been just the opposite, Clelia Conti was a young girl still a trifle too slim, who might be compared to the beautiful models of Guido Reni. We make no attempt to conceal the fact that, according to Greek ideas of beauty, the objection might have been made that her head had certain features a trifle too strongly marked; the lips, for instance, though full of the most touching charm, were a little too substantial.

The admirable peculiarity of this face in which shone the artless graces and the heavenly imprint of the most noble soul was that, albeit of the rarest and most singular beauty, it did not in any way resemble the heads of Greek sculpture. The Duchessa had, on the other hand, a little too much of the recognised beauty of the ideal type, and her truly Lombard head recalled the voluptuous smile and tender melancholy of Leonardo's lovely paintings of Herodias. Just as the Duchessa shone, sparkled with wit and irony, attaching herself passionately, if one may use the expression, to all the subjects which the course of the conversation brought before her mind's eye, so Clelia showed herself calm and slow to move, whether from contempt for her natural surroundings or from regret for some unfulfilled dream. It had long been thought that she would end by embracing the religious life. At twenty she was observed to show a repugnance towards going to balls, and if she accompanied her father to these entertainments it was only out of obedience to him and in order not to jeopardise the interests of his career.

"It is apparently going to be impossible for me," the General in his vulgarity of spirit was too prone to repeat, "heaven having given me as a daughter the most beautiful person in the States of our Sovereign, and the most virtuous, to derive any benefit from her for the advancement of my fortune! I live in too great isolation, I have only her in the world, and what I must absolutely have is a family that will support me socially, and will procure for me a certain number of houses where my merit, and especially my aptitude for ministerial office shall be laid down as unchallengeable postulates in any political discussion. And there is my daughter, so beautiful, so sensible, so religious, taking offence whenever a young man well established at court attempts to find favour in her sight. If the suitor is dismissed, her character becomes less sombre, and I see her appear almost gay, until another

champion enters the lists. The handsomest man at court, Conte Baldi, presented himself and failed to please; the richest man in His Highness's States, the Marchese Crescenzi, has now followed him; she insists that he would make her miserable.

"Decidedly," the General would say at other times, "my daughter's eyes are finer than the Duchessa's, particularly as, on rare occasions, they are capable of assuming a more profound expression; but that magnificent expression, when does anyone ever see it? Never in a drawing-room where she might do justice to it; but simply out driving alone with me, when she lets herself be moved, for instance, by the miserable state of some hideous rustic. 'Keep some reflexion of that sublime gaze,' I tell her at times, 'for the drawing-rooms in which we shall be appearing this evening.' Not a bit of it: should she condescend to accompany me into society, her pure and noble features present the somewhat haughty and scarcely encouraging expression of passive obedience." The General spared himself no trouble, as we can see, in his search for a suitable son-in-law, but what he said was true.

Courtiers, who have nothing to contemplate in their own hearts, notice every little thing that goes on round about them; they had observed that it was particularly on those days when Clelia could not succeed in making herself emerge from her precious musings and feign an interest in anything that the Duchessa chose to stop beside her and tried to make her talk, Clelia had hair of an ashen fairness, which stood out with a charming effect against cheeks that were delicately tinted but, as a rule, rather too pale. The mere shape of her brow might have told an attentive observer that that air, so instinct with nobility, that manner, so far superior to vulgar charms, sprang from a profound indifference to everything that was vulgar. It was the absence and not the impossibility of interest in anything. Since her father had become governor of the citadel, Clelia had found happiness, or at least freedom from vexations in her lofty abode. The appalling number of steps that had to be climbed in order to reach this official residence of the governor, situated on the platform of the main tower, kept away tedious visitors, and Clelia, for this material reason, enjoyed the liberty of the convent; she found there almost all the ideal of happiness which at one time she had thought of seeking from the religious life. She was seized by a sort of horror at the mere thought of putting her beloved solitude and her secret thoughts at the disposal of a young man whom the title of husband would authorise to

disturb all this inner life. If, by her solitude, she did not attain to happiness, at least she had succeeded in avoiding sensations that were too painful.

On the evening after Fabrizio had been taken to the fortress, the Duchessa met Clelia at the party given by the Minister of the Interior, Conte Zurla; everyone gathered round them; that evening, Clelia's beauty outshone the Duchessa's. The beautiful eyes of the girl wore an expression so singular and so profound as to be almost indiscreet; there was pity, there were indignation also and anger in her gaze. The gaiety and brilliant ideas of the Duchessa seemed to plunge Clelia into spells of grief that bordered on horror. "What will be the cries and groans of this poor woman," she said to herself, "when she learns that her lover, that young man with so great a heart and so noble a countenance, has just been flung into prison? And that look in the Sovereign's eyes which condemns him to death! O Absolute Power, when wilt thou cease to crush down Italy! O base and venal souls! And I am the daughter of a gaoler! And I have done nothing to deny that noble station, for I did not deign to answer Fabrizio! And once before he was my benefactor! What can he be thinking of me at this moment, alone in his room with his little lamp for sole companion?" Revolted by this idea, Clelia cast a look of horror at the magnificent illumination of the drawing-rooms of the Minister of the Interior.

"Never," the word went round the circle of courtiers who had gathered round the two reigning beauties, and were seeking to join in their conversation, "never have they talked to one another with so animated and at the same time so intimate an air. Can the Duchessa, who is always so careful to smooth away the animosities aroused by the Prime Minister, can she have thought of some great marriage for Clelia?" This conjecture was founded upon a circumstance which until then had never presented itself to the observation of the court: the girl's eyes shewed more fire, and indeed, if one may use the term, more passion than those of the beautiful Duchessa. The latter, for her part, was astonished, and, one may say it to her credit, delighted by the discovery of charms so novel in the young recluse; for an hour she had been gazing at her with a pleasure by no means commonly felt in the sight of a rival. "Why, what can have happened?" the Duchessa asked herself; "never has Clelia looked so beautiful, or, one might say, so touching: can her heart have spoken? . . . But in that case, certainly, it is an unhappy love, there is a dark grief at the root of this strange animation. . . . But

unhappy love keeps silent. Can it be a question of recalling a faithless lover by shining in society?" And the Duchessa gazed with attention at all the young men who stood round them. Nowhere could she see any unusual expression, every face shone with a more or less pleased fatuity. "But a miracle must have happened," the Duchessa told herself, vexed by her inability to solve the mystery. "Where is Conte Mosca, that man of discernment? No, I am not mistaken, Clelia is looking at me attentively, and as if I was for her the object of a quite novel interest. Is it the effect of some order received from her father, that vile courtier? I supposed that young and noble mind to be incapable of lowering itself to any pecuniary consideration. Can General Fabio Conti have some decisive request to make of the Conte?"

About ten o'clock, a friend of the Duchessa came up to her and murmured a few words; she turned extremely pale: Clelia took her hand and ventured to press it.

"I thank you, and I understand you now . . . you have a noble heart," said the Duchessa, making an effort to control herself; she had barely the strength to utter these few words. She smiled profusely at the lady of the house, who rose to escort her to the door of the outermost drawing-room: such honours were due only to Princesses of the Blood, and were for the Duchessa an ironical comment on her position at the moment. And so she continued to smile at Contessa Zurla, but in spite of untold efforts did not succeed in uttering a single word.

Clelia's eyes filled with tears as she watched the Duchessa pass through these rooms, thronged at the moment with all the most brilliant figures in society. "What is going to happen to that poor woman," she wondered, "when she finds herself alone in her carriage? It would be an indiscretion on my part to offer to accompany her, I dare not. . . . And yet, what a consolation it would be to the poor prisoner, sitting in some wretched cell, if he knew that he was loved to such a point! What a frightful solitude that must be in which they have plunged him! And we, we are here in these brilliant rooms, how horrible! Can there be any way of conveying a message to him? Great God! That would be treachery to my father; his position is so delicate between the two parties! What will become of him if he exposes himself to the passionate hatred of the Duchessa, who controls the will of the Prime Minister, who in three out of every four things here is the master? On

the other hand, the Prince takes an unceasing interest in everything that goes on at the fortress, and will not listen to any jest on that subject; fear makes him cruel. . . . In any case, Fabrizio" (Clelia no longer thought of him as Signor del Dongo) "is greatly to be pitied. . . . It is a very different thing for him from the risk of losing a lucrative post! . . . And the Duchessa! . . . What a terrible passion love is! . . . And yet all those liars in society speak of it as a source of happiness! One is sorry for elderly women because they can no longer feel or inspire love. . . . Never shall I forget what I have just seen; what a sudden change! How those beautiful, radiant eyes of the Duchessa turned dull and dead after the fatal word which Marchese N —— came up and said to her! . . . Fabrizio must indeed be worthy of love!"

Breaking in upon these highly serious reflexions, which were absorbing the whole of Clelia's mind, the complimentary speeches which always surrounded her seemed to her even more distasteful than usual. To escape from them she went across to an open window, half screened by a taffeta curtain; she hoped that no one would be so bold as to follow her into this sort of sanctuary. This window opened upon a little grove of orange-trees planted in the ground: as a matter of fact, every winter they had to be protected by a covering, Clelia inhaled with rapture the scent of their blossom, and this pleasure seemed to restore a little calm to her spirit. "I felt that he had a very noble air," she thought, "but to inspire such passion in so distinguished a woman! She has had the glory of refusing the Prince's homage, and if she had deigned to consent, she would have reigned as queen over his States. . . . My father says that the Sovereign's passion went so far as to promise to marry her if ever he became free to do so. . . . And this love for Fabrizio has lasted so long! For it is quite five years since we met them by the Lake of Como. . . . Yes, it is quite five years," she said to herself after a moment's reflexion. "I was struck by it even then, when so many things passed unnoticed before my childish eyes. How those two ladies seemed to admire Fabrizio! . . ."

Clelia remarked with joy that none of the young men who had been speaking to her with such earnestness had ventured to approach her balcony. One of them, the Marchese Crescenzi, had taken a few steps in that direction, but had then stopped by a card-table. "If only," she said to herself, "under my window in our palazzo in the fortress, the only one that has any shade, I had some pretty orange-trees like these to look at, my thoughts would be less

sad: but to have as one's sole outlook the huge blocks of stone of the Torre Farnese. . . . Ah!" she cried with a convulsive movement, "perhaps that is where they have put him. I must speak about it at once to Don Cesare! He will be less severe than the General. My father is certain to tell me nothing on our way back to the fortress, but I shall find out everything from Don Cesare. . . . I have money, I could buy a few orange-trees, which, placed under the window of my aviary, would prevent me from seeing that great wall of the Torre Farnese. How infinitely more hateful still it will be to me now that I know one of the people whom it hides from the light of day! . . . Yes, it is just the third time I have seen him. Once at court, at the ball on the Princess's birthday; today, hemmed in by three constables, while that horrible Barbone was begging for handcuffs to be put on him, and the other time by the Lake of Como. That is quite five years ago. What a hang-dog air he had then! How he stared at the constables, and what curious looks his mother and his aunt kept giving him. Certainly there must have been some secret that day, some special knowledge which they were keeping to themselves; at the time, I had an idea that he too was afraid of the police. . . . " Clelia shuddered; "But how ignorant I was! No doubt at that time the Duchessa had already begun to take an interest in him. How he made us laugh after the first few minutes, when the ladies, in spite of their obvious anxiety, had begun to grow more accustomed to the presence of a stranger! . . . And this evening I had not a word to say in reply when he spoke to me. . . . O ignorance and timidity! How often you have the appearance of the blackest cowardice! And I am like this at twenty, yes and past twenty! . . . I was well-advised to think of the cloister; really I am good for nothing but retirement. 'Worthy daughter of a gaoler!' he will have been saying to himself. He despises me, and, as soon as he is able to write to the Duchessa, he will tell her of my want of consideration, and the Duchessa will think me a very deceitful little girl; for, after all, this evening she must have thought me full of sympathy with her in her trouble."

Clelia noticed that someone was approaching, apparently with the intention of taking his place by her side on the iron balcony of this window; she could not help feeling annoyed, although she blamed herself for being so; the meditations in which she was disturbed were by no means without their pleasant side. "Here comes some troublesome fellow to whom I shall give a warm welcome!" she thought. She was turning her head with a haughty stare, when she caught sight of the timid face of the Archbishop, who was

approaching the balcony by a series of almost imperceptible little movements. “This saintly man has no manners,” thought Clelia. “Why come and disturb a poor girl like me? My tranquillity is the only thing I possess.” She was greeting him with respect, but at the same time with a haughty air, When the prelate said to her:

“Signorina, have you heard the terrible news?”

The girl’s eyes had at once assumed a totally different expression; but, following the instructions repeated to her a hundred times over by her father, she replied with an air of ignorance which the language of her eyes loudly contradicted:

“I have heard nothing, Monsignore.”

“My First Grand Vicar, poor Fabrizio del Dongo, who is no more guilty than I am of the death of that brigand Giletti, has been arrested at Bologna where he was living under the assumed name of Giuseppe Bossi; they have shut him up in your citadel; he arrived there actually chained to the carriage that brought him. A sort of gaoler, named Barbone, who was pardoned some time ago after murdering one of his own brothers, chose to attempt an act of personal violence against Fabrizio, but my young friend is not the man to take an insult quietly. He flung his infamous adversary to the ground, whereupon they cast him into a dungeon, twenty feet underground, after first putting handcuffs on his wrists.”

“Not handcuffs, no!”

“Ah! Then you do know something,” cried the Archbishop. And the old man’s features lost their intense expression of discouragement. “But, before we go any farther, someone may come out on to this balcony and interrupt us: would you be so charitable as to convey personally to Don Cesare my pastoral ring here?”

The girl took the ring, but did not know where to put it for fear of losing it.

“Put it on your thumb,” said the Archbishop; and he himself slipped the ring into position. “Can I count upon you to deliver this ring?”

“Yes, Monsignore.”

“Will you promise me to keep secret what I am going to say, even if circumstances should arise in which you may find it inconvenient to agree to my request?”

“Why, yes, Monsignore,” replied the girl, trembling all over as she observed the sombre and serious air which the old man had suddenly assumed. . . .

“Our estimable Archbishop,” she went on, “can give me no orders that are not worthy of himself and me.”

“Say to Don Cesare that I commend to him my adopted son; I know that the sbirri who carried him off did not give him time to take his breviary with him, I therefore request Don Cesare to let him have his own, and if your uncle will send tomorrow to my Palace, I promise to replace the book given by him to Fabrizio. I request Don Cesare also to convey the ring which this pretty hand is now wearing to Signor del Dongo.” The Archibishop was interrupted by General Fabio Conti, who came in search of his daughter to take her to the carriage; there was a brief interval of conversation in which the prelate shewed a certain adroitness. Without making any reference to the latest prisoner, he so arranged matters that the course of the conversation led naturally to the utterance of certain moral and political maxims by himself; for instance: “There are moments of crisis in the life of a court which decide for long periods the existence of the most exalted personages; it would be distinctly imprudent to change into personal hatred the state of political aloofness which is often the quite simple result of diametrically opposite positions.” The Archbishop, letting himself be carried away to some extent by the profound grief which he felt at so unexpected an arrest, went so far as to say that one must undoubtedly strive to retain the position one holds, but that it would be a quite gratuitous imprudence to attract to oneself furious hatreds in consequence of lending oneself to certain actions which are never forgotten.

When the General was in the carriage with his daughter: “Those might be described as threats,” he said to her. . . . “Threats, to a man of my sort!”

No other words passed between father and daughter for the next twenty minutes.

On receiving the Archbishop's pastoral ring, Clelia had indeed promised herself that she would inform her father, as soon as she was in the carriage, of the little service which the prelate had asked of her; but after the word threats, uttered with anger, she took it for granted that her father would intercept the token; she covered the ring with her left hand and pressed it passionately. During the whole of the time that it took them to drive from the Ministry of the Interior to the citadel, she was asking herself whether it would be criminal on her part not to speak of the matter to her father. She was extremely pious, extremely timorous, and her heart, usually so tranquil, beat with an unaccustomed violence; but in the end the chi va là of the sentry posted on the rampart above the gate rang out on the approach of the carriage before Clelia had found a form of words calculated to incline her father not to refuse, so much afraid was she of his refusing. As they climbed the three hundred and sixty steps which led to the governor's residence, Clelia could think of nothing.

She hastened to speak to her uncle, who rebuked her and refused to lend himself to anything.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“Well,” cried the General, when he caught sight of his brother Don Cesare, “here is the Duchessa going to spend a hundred thousand scudi to make a fool of me and help the prisoner to escape!”

But, for the moment, we are obliged to leave Fabrizio in his prison, at the very summit of the citadel of Parma; he is well guarded and we shall perhaps find him a little altered when we return to him. We must now concern ourselves first of all with the court, where certain highly complicated intrigues, and in particular the passions of an unhappy woman are going to decide his fate. As he climbed the three hundred and ninety steps to his prison in the Torre Farnese, beneath the eyes of the governor, Fabrizio, who had so greatly dreaded this moment, found that he had no time to think of his misfortunes.

On returning home after the party at Conte Zurla’s, the Duchessa dismissed her women with a wave of the hand; then, letting herself fall, fully dressed, on to her bed, “Fabrizio,” she cried aloud, “is in the power of his enemies, and perhaps to spite me they will give him poison!” How is one to depict the moment of despair that followed this statement of the situation in a woman so far from reasonable, so much the slave of every passing sensation, and, without admitting it to herself, desperately in love with the young prisoner? There were inarticulate cries, paroxysms of rage, convulsive movements, but never a tear. She had sent her women away to conceal her tears; she thought that she was going to break into sobs as soon as she found herself alone; but tears, those first comforters in hours of great sorrow, completely failed her. Anger, indignation, the sense of her own inferiority when matched with the Prince, had too firm a mastery of this proud soul.

“Am I not humiliated enough?” she kept on exclaiming; “I am outraged, and, worse still, Fabrizio’s life is in danger; and I have no means of vengeance! Wait a moment, my Prince; you kill me, well and good, you have the power to do so; but afterwards I shall have your life. Alas! Poor Fabrizio, how will that help you? What a difference from the day when I was proposing to leave

Parma, and yet even then I thought I was unhappy . . . what blindness! I was going to break with all the habits and customs of a pleasant life; alas! without knowing it, I was on the edge of an event which was to decide my fate for ever. Had not the Conte, with the miserable fawning instinct of a courtier, omitted the words unjust proceedings from that fatal note which the Prince's vanity allowed me to secure, we should have been saved. I had had the good fortune (rather than the skill, I must admit) to bring into play his personal vanity on the subject of his beloved town of Parma. Then I threatened to leave, then I was free. . . . Great God! What sort of slave am I now? Here I am now nailed down in this foul sewer, and Fabrizio in chains in the citadel, in that citadel which for so many eminent men has been the ante-room of death; and I can no longer keep that tiger cowed by the fear of seeing me leave his den.

"He has too much sense not to realise that I will never move from the infamous tower in which my heart is enchained. Now, the injured vanity of the man may put the oddest ideas into his head; their fantastic cruelty would but whet the appetite of his astounding vanity. If he returns to his former programme of insipid love-making, if he says to me: 'Accept the devotion of your slave or Fabrizio dies,' — well, there is the old story of Judith. . . . Yes, but if it is only suicide for me, it will be murder for Fabrizio; his fool of a successor, our Crown Prince, and the infamous headsman Rassi will have Fabrizio hanged as my accomplice."

The Duchessa wailed aloud: this dilemma, from which she could see no way of escape, was torturing her unhappy heart. Her distracted head could see no other probability in the future. For ten minutes she writhed like a madwoman; then a sleep of utter exhaustion took the place for a few moments of this horrible state, life was crushed out. A few minutes later she awoke with a start and found herself sitting on her bed; she had dreamed that, in her presence, the Prince was going to cut off Fabrizio's head. With what haggard eyes the Duchessa stared round her! When at length she was convinced that neither Fabrizio nor the Prince was in the room with her, she fell back on her bed and was on the point of fainting. Her physical exhaustion was such, that she could not summon up enough strength to change her position. "Great God! If I could die!" she said to herself. . . . "But what cowardice, for me to abandon Fabrizio in his trouble! My wits are straying. . . . Come, let us get back to the facts; let us consider calmly the

execrable position in which I have plunged myself, as though of my own free will. What a lamentable piece of stupidity to come and live at the court of an Absolute Prince! A tyrant who knows all his victims; every look they give him he interprets as a defiance of his power. Alas, that is what neither the Conte nor I took into account when we left Milan: I thought of the attractions of an amusing court; something inferior, it is true, but something in the same style as the happy days of Prince Eugène.

"Looking from without, we can form no idea of what is meant by the authority of a despot who knows all his subjects by sight. The outward form of despotism is the same as that of the other kinds of government: there are judges, for instance, but they are Rassis: the monster! He would see nothing extraordinary in hanging his own father if the Prince ordered him to do so. . . . He would call it his duty . . . . Seduce Rassi! Unhappy wretch that I am! I possess no means of doing so. What can I offer him? A hundred thousand francs, possibly: and they say that, after the last dagger-blow which the wrath of heaven against this unhappy country allowed him to escape, the Prince sent him ten thousand golden sequins in a casket. Besides, what sum of money would seduce him? That soul of mud, which has never read anything but contempt in the eyes of men, enjoys here the pleasure of seeing now fear, and even respect there; he may become Minister of Police, and why not? Then three-fourths of the inhabitants of the place will be his base courtiers, and will tremble before him in as servile a fashion as he himself trembles before his Sovereign.

"Since I cannot fly this detested spot, I must be of use here to Fabrizio: live alone, in solitude, in despair! — what can I do then for Fabrizio? Come; forward, unhappy woman! Do your duty; go into society, pretend to think no more of Fabrizio. . . . Pretend to forget him, the dear angel!"

So speaking, the Duchessa burst into tears; at last she could weep. After an hour set apart for human frailty, she saw with some slight consolation that her mind was beginning to grow clearer. "To have the magic carpet," she said to herself, "to snatch Fabrizio from the citadel and fly with him to some happy place where we could not be pursued, Paris for instance. We should live there, at first, on the twelve hundred francs which his father's agent transmits to me with so pleasing a regularity. I could easily gather together a hundred thousand francs from the remains of my fortune!" The Duchessa's

imagination passed in review, with moments of unspeakable delight, all the details of the life which she would lead three hundred leagues from Parma. "There," she said to herself, "he could enter the service under an assumed name. . . . Placed in a regiment of those gallant Frenchmen, the young Valserra would speedily win a reputation; at last he would be happy."

These blissful pictures brought on a second flood of tears, but they were tears of joy. So happiness did exist then somewhere in the world! This state lasted for a long time; the poor woman had a horror of coming back to the contemplation of the grim reality. At length, as the light of dawn began to mark with a white line the tops of the trees in her garden, she forced herself into a state of composure. "In a few hours from now," she told herself, "I shall be on the field of battle; it will be a case for action, and if anything should occur to irritate me, if the Prince should take it into his head to say anything to me about Fabrizio, I am by no means certain that I can keep myself properly in control. I must therefore, here and now, make plans.

"If I am declared a State criminal, Rassi will seize everything there is in this palazzo; on the first of this month the Conte and I burned, as usual, all papers of which the police might make any improper use; and he is Minister of Police! That is the amusing part of it. I have three diamonds of some value; tomorrow, Fulgenzio, my old boatman from Grianta, will set off for Geneva, where he will deposit them in a safe place. Should Fabrizio ever escape (Great God, be Thou propitious to me!" She crossed herself), "the unutterable meanness of the Marchese del Dongo will decide that it is a sin to supply food to a man pursued by a lawful Sovereign: then he will at least find my diamonds, he will have bread.

"Dismiss the Conte . . . being left alone with him, after what has happened, is the one thing I cannot face. The poor man! He is not bad really, far from it; he is only weak. That commonplace soul does not rise to the level of ours. Poor Fabrizio! Why cannot you be here for a moment with me to discuss our perils?

"The Conte's meticulous prudence would spoil all my plans, and besides, I must on no account involve him in my downfall. . . . For why should not the vanity of that tyrant cast me into prison? I shall have conspired . . . what could be easier to prove? If it should be to his citadel that he sent me, and I

could manage, by bribery, to speak to Fabrizio, were it only for an instant, with what courage would we step out together to death! But enough of such follies: his Rassi would advise him to make an end of me with poison; my appearance in the streets, riding upon a cart, might touch the hearts of his dear Parmesans. . . . But what is this? Still romancing? Alas! These follies must be forgiven a poor woman whose actual lot is so piteous! The truth of all this is that the Prince will not send me to my death; but nothing could be more easy than to cast me into prison and keep me there; he will make his people hide all sorts of suspicious papers in some corner of my palazzo, as they did with that poor L —— . Then three judges — not too big rascals, for they will have what is called documentary evidence — and a dozen false witnesses will be all he needs. So I may be sentenced to death as having conspired, and the Prince, in his boundless clemency, taking into consideration the fact that I have had the honour of being admitted to his court, will commute my punishment to ten years in a fortress. But I, so as not to fall short in any way of that violent character which has led the Marchesa Raversi and my other enemies to say so many stupid things about me, will poison myself bravely. So, at least, the public will be kind enough to believe; but I wager that Rassi will appear in my cell to bring me gallantly, in the Prince's name, a little bottle of strychnine, or Perugia opium.

"Yes, I must quarrel in the most open manner with the Conte, for I do not wish to involve him in my downfall — that would be a scandalous thing; the poor man has loved me with such candour! My mistake lay in thinking that a true courtier would have sufficient heart left to be capable of love. Very probably the Prince will find some excuse for casting me into prison; he will be afraid of my perverting public opinion with regard to Fabrizio. The Conte is a man of perfect honour; at once he will do what the sycophants of this court, in their profound astonishment, will call madness, he will leave the court. I braved the Prince's authority on the evening of the note; I may expect anything from his wounded vanity: does a man who is born a Prince ever forget the sensation I gave him that evening? Besides, the Conte, once he has quarrelled with me, is in a stronger position for being of use to Fabrizio. But if the Conte, whom this decision of mine must plunge in despair, should avenge himself? . . . There, now, is an idea that would never occur to him; his is not a fundamentally base nature like the Prince's; the Conte may, with a sigh of protest, countersign a wicked decree, but he is a man of honour. And besides, avenge himself for what? Simply because, after

loving him for five years without giving the slightest offence to his love, I say to him: ‘Dear Conte, I had the good fortune to be in love with you: very well, that flame is burning low; I no longer love you, but I know your heart through and through; I retain a profound regard for you and you will always be my best friend.”

“What answer can a galantuomo make to so sincere a declaration?

“I shall take a new lover, or so at least people will suppose; I shall say to this lover: ‘After all, the Prince does right to punish Fabrizio’s folly; but on the day of his festa, no doubt our gracious Sovereign will set him at liberty.’ Thus I gain six months. The new lover whom prudence suggests to me would be that venal judge, that foul hangman of a Rassi. . . . He would find himself ennobled and, as far as that goes, I shall give him the right of entry into good society. Forgive me, dear Fabrizio; such an effort, for me, is beyond the bounds of possibility. What! That monster, still all bespattered with the blood of Conte P —— — and of D —— — ! I should faint with horror whenever he came near me, or rather I should seize a knife and plunge it into his vile heart. Do not ask of me things that are impossible!

“Yes, that is the first thing to do: forget Fabrizio! And not the least trace of anger with the Prince; I must resume my ordinary gaiety, which will seem all the more attractive to these souls of mud, in the first place because I shall appear to be submitting with good grace to their Sovereign’s will, secondly because, so far from laughing at them, I shall take good care to bring out all their pretty little qualities; for instance, I shall compliment Conte Zurla on the beauty of the white feather in his hat, which he has just had sent him from Lyons by courier, and which keeps him perfectly happy.

“Choose a lover from the Raversi’s party. . . . If the Conte goes, that will be the party in office; there is where the power will lie. It will be a friend of the Raversi that will reign over the citadel, for Fabio Conti will take office as Minister. How in the world will the Prince, a man used to good society, a man of intelligence, accustomed to the charming collaboration of the Conte, be able to discuss business with that ox, that king of fools, whose whole life has been occupied with the fundamental problem: ought His Highness’s troops to have seven buttons on their uniform, in front, or nine? It is all those brute beasts thoroughly jealous of myself, and that is where you are in

danger, dear Fabrizio, it is those brute beasts who are going to decide my fate and yours! Well then, shall I not allow the Conte to hand in his resignation? Let him remain, even if he has to submit to humiliations. He always imagines that to resign is the greatest sacrifice a Prime Minister can make; and whenever his mirror tells him he is growing old, he offers me that sacrifice: a complete rupture, then; yes, and reconciliation only in the event of its being the sole method of prevailing upon him not to go. Naturally, I shall give him his dismissal in the friendliest possible way; but, after his courtier-like omission of the words unjust proceedings in the Prince's note, I feel that, if I am not to hate him, I need to spend some months without seeing him. On that decisive evening, I had no need of his cleverness; he had only to write down what I dictated to him, he had only to write those words which I had obtained by my own strength of character: he was led away by force of habit as a base courtier. He told me next day that he could not make the Prince sign an absurdity, that we should have had letters of grace; why, good God, with people like that, with those monsters of vanity and rancour who bear the name Farnese, one takes what one can get."

At the thought of this, all the Duchessa's anger was rekindled. "The Prince has betrayed me," she said to herself, "and in how dastardly a way! There is no excuse for the man: he has brains, discernment, he is capable of reasoning; there is nothing base in him but his passions. The Conte and I have noticed it a score of times; his mind becomes vulgar only when he imagines that some one has tried to insult him. Well, Fabrizio's crime has nothing to do with politics, it is a trifling homicide, just like a hundred others that are reported every day in his happy States, and the Conte has sworn to me that he has taken pains to procure the most accurate information, and that Fabrizio is innocent. That Giletti was certainly not lacking in courage: finding himself within a few yards of the frontier, he suddenly felt the temptation to rid himself of an attractive rival."

The Duchessa paused for a long time to consider whether it were possible to believe in Fabrizio's guilt, not that she felt that it would have been a very grave sin in a gentleman of her nephew's rank to rid himself of the impertinence of a mummer; but, in her despair, she was beginning to feel vaguely that she would be obliged to fight to prove Fabrizio's innocence. "No," she told herself finally, "here is a decisive proof: he is like poor Pietranera, he always has all his pockets stuffed with weapons, and that day

he was carrying only a wretched singled-barrelled gun, and even that he had borrowed from one of the workmen.

“I hate the Prince because he has betrayed me, and betrayed me in the most dastardly fashion; after his written pardon, he had the poor boy seized at Bologna, and all that. But I shall settle that account.” About five o’clock in the morning, the Duchessa, crushed by this prolonged fit of despair, rang for her women, who screamed. Seeing her on her bed, fully dressed, with her diamonds, pale as the sheet on which she lay and with closed eyes, it seemed to them as though they beheld her laid out in state after death. They would have supposed that she had completely lost consciousness had they not remembered that she had just rung for them. A few rare tears trickled from time to time down her insentient cheeks; her women gathered from a sign which she made that she wished to be put to bed.

Twice that evening after the party at the Minister Zurla’s, the Conte had called on the Duchessa; being refused admittance, he wrote to her that he wished to ask her advice as to his conduct. Ought he to retain his post after the insult that they had dared to offer him? The Conte went on to say: “The young man is innocent; but, were he guilty, ought they to arrest him without first informing me, his acknowledged protector?” The Duchessa did not see this letter until the following day.

The Conte had no virtue; one may indeed add that what the Liberals understand by virtue (seeking the greatest happiness of the greatest number) seemed to him silly; he believed himself bound to seek first and foremost the happiness of Conte Mosca della Rovere; but he was entirely honourable, and perfectly sincere when he spoke of his resignation.

Never in his life had he told the Duchessa a lie; she, as it happened, did not pay the slightest attention to this letter; her attitude, and a very painful attitude it was, had been adopted: to pretend to forget Fabrizio; after that effort, nothing else mattered to her.

Next day, about noon, the Conte, who had called ten times at the palazzo Sanseverina, was at length admitted; he was appalled when he saw the Duchessa. . . . “She looks forty!” he said to himself; “and yesterday she was so brilliant, so young! . . . Everyone tells me that, during her long

conversation with Clelia Conti, she looked every bit as young and far more attractive."

The Duchessa's voice, her tone were as strange as her personal appearance. This tone, divested of all passion, of all human interest, of all anger, turned the Conte pale; it reminded him of the manner of a friend of his who, a few months earlier, when on the point of death, and after receiving the Last Sacrament, had sent for him to talk to him. After some minutes the Duchessa was able to speak to him. She looked at him, and her eyes remained dead.

"Let us part, my dear Conte," she said to him in a faint but quite articulate voice which she tried to make sound friendly; "let us part, we must! Heaven is my witness that, for five years, my behaviour towards you has been irreproachable. You have given me a brilliant existence, in place of the boredom which would have been my sad portion at the castle of Grianta; without you I should have reached old age several years sooner. . . . For my part, my sole occupation has been to try to make you find happiness. It is because I love you that I propose to you this parting à l'amiable, as they say in France."

The Conte did not understand; she was obliged to repeat her statement several times. He grew deadly pale, and, flinging himself on his knees by her bedside, said to her all the things that profound astonishment, followed by the keenest despair, can inspire in a man who is passionately in love. At every moment he offered to hand in his resignation and to follow his mistress to some retreat a thousand leagues from Parma.

"You dare to speak to me of departure, and Fabrizio is here!" she at length exclaimed, half rising. But seeing that the sound of Fabrizio's name made a painful impression, she added after a moment's quiet, gently pressing the Conte's hand: "No, dear friend, I am not going to tell you that I have loved you with that passion and those transports which one no longer feels, it seems to me, after thirty, and I am already a long way past that age. They will have told you that I was in love with Fabrizio, for I know that the rumour has gone round in this wicked court." (Her eyes sparkled for the first time in this conversation, as she uttered the word wicked.) "I swear to you before God, and upon Fabrizio's life, that never has there passed between him and me the tiniest thing which could not have borne the eyes of a third

person. Nor shall I say to you that I love him exactly as a sister might; I love him instinctively, so to speak. I love in him his courage, so simple and so perfect that, one may say, he is not aware of it himself; I remember that this sort of admiration began on his return from Waterloo. He was still a boy then, for all his seventeen years; his great anxiety was to know whether he had really been present at the battle, and, if so, whether he could say that he had fought, when he had not marched to the attack of any enemy battery or column. It was during the serious discussions which we used to have together on this important subject that I began to see in him a perfect charm. His great soul revealed itself to me; what sophisticated falsehoods would a well-bred young man, in his place, have flaunted! Well then, if he is not happy I cannot be happy. There, that is a statement which well describes the state of my heart; if it is not the truth it is at any rate all of it that I see." The Conte, encouraged by this tone of frankness and intimacy, tried to kiss her hand; she drew it back with a sort of horror. "The time is past," she said to him; "I am a woman of thirty-seven, I find myself on the threshold of old age, I already feel all its discouragements, and perhaps I have even drawn near to the tomb. That is a terrible moment, by all one hears, and yet it seems to me that I desire it. I feel the worst symptom of old age; my heart is extinguished by this frightful misfortune, I can no longer love. I see in you now, dear Conte, only the shade of someone who was dear to me. I shall say more, it is gratitude, simply and solely, that makes me speak to you thus."

"What is to become of me," the Conte repeated, "of me who feel that I am attached to you more passionately than in the first days of our friendship, when I saw you at the Scala?"

"Let me confess to you one thing, dear friend, this talk of love bores me, and seems to me indecent. Come," she said, trying to smile, but in vain, "courage! Be the man of spirit, the judicious man, the man of resource in all circumstances. Be with me what you really are in the eyes of strangers, the most able man and the greatest politician that Italy has produced for ages."

The Conte rose, and paced the room in silence for some moments.

"Impossible, dear friend," he said to her at length; "I am rent asunder by the most violent passion, and you ask me to consult my reason. There is no longer any reason for me!" "Let us not speak of passion, I beg of you," she

said in a dry tone; and this was the first time, after two hours of talk, that her voice assumed any expression whatever. The Conte, in despair himself, sought to console her.

“He has betrayed me,” she cried without in any way considering the reasons for hope which the Conte was setting before her; “he has betrayed me in the most dastardly fashion!” Her deadly pallor ceased for a moment; but, even in this moment of violent excitement, the Conte noticed that she had not the strength to raise her arms.

“Great God! Can it be possible,” he thought, “that she is only ill? In that case, though, it would be the beginning of some very serious illness.” Then, filled with uneasiness, he proposed to call in the famous Razori, the leading physician in the place and in the whole of Italy.

“So you wish to give a stranger the pleasure of learning the whole extent of my despair? . . . Is that the counsel of a traitor or of a friend?” And she looked at him with strange eyes.

“It is all over,” he said to himself with despair, “she has no longer any love for me! And worse still, she no longer includes me even among the common men of honour.

“I may tell you,” the Conte went on, speaking with emphasis, “that I have been anxious above all things to obtain details of the arrest which has thrown us into despair, and the curious thing is that still I know nothing positive; I have had the constables at the nearest station questioned, they saw the prisoner arrive by the Castelnuovo road and received orders to follow his sediola. I at once sent off Bruno, whose zeal is as well known to you as his devotion; he has orders to go on from station to station until he finds out where and how Fabrizio was arrested.”

On hearing him utter Fabrizio’s name, the Duchessa was seized by a slight convulsion.

“Forgive me, my friend,” she said to the Conte as soon as she was able to speak; “these details interest me greatly, give me them all, let me have a clear understanding of the smallest circumstances.”

“Well, Signora,” the Conte went on, assuming a somewhat lighter air in the hope of distracting her a little, “I have a good mind to send a confidential messenger to Bruno and to order him to push on as far as Bologna; it was from there, perhaps, that our young friend was carried off. What is the date of his last letter?”

“Tuesday, five days ago.”

“Had it been opened in the post?”

“No trace of any opening. I ought to tell you that it was written on horrible paper; the address is in a woman’s hand, and that address bears the name of an old laundress who is related to my maid. The laundress believes that it is something to do with a love affair, and Cecchina refunds her for the carriage of the letters without adding anything further.” The Conte, who had adopted quite the tone of a man of business, tried to discover, by questioning the Duchessa, which could have been the day of the abduction from Bologna. He only then perceived, he who had ordinarily so much tact, that this was the right tone to adopt. These details interested the unhappy woman and seemed to distract her a little. If the Conte had not been in love, this simple idea would have occurred to him as soon as he entered the room. The Duchessa sent him away in order that he might without delay despatch fresh orders to the faithful Bruno. As they were momentarily considering the question whether there had been a sentence passed before the moment at which the Prince signed the note addressed to the Duchessa, the latter with a certain determination seized the opportunity to say to the Conte: “I shall not reproach you in the least for having omitted the words unjust proceedings in the letter which you wrote and he signed, it was the courtier’s instinct that gripped you by the throat; unconsciously you preferred your master’s interest to your friend’s. You have placed your actions under my orders, dear Conte, and that for a long time past, but it is not in your power to change your nature; you have great talents for the part of Minister, but you have also the instinct of their trade. The suppression of the word unjust was my ruin; but far be it from me to reproach you for it in any way, it was the fault of your instinct and not of your will.

“Bear in mind,” she went on, changing her tone, and with the most imperious air, “that I am by no means unduly afflicted by the abduction of

Fabrizio, that I have never had the slightest intention of removing myself from this place, that I am full of respect for the Prince. That is what you have to say, and this is what I, for my part, wish to say to you: 'As I intend to have the entire control of my own behaviour for the future, I wish to part from you à l'amiable, that is to say as a good and old friend. Consider that I am sixty, the young woman is dead In me, I can no longer form an exaggerated idea of anything in the world, I can no longer love.' But I should be even more wretched than I am were I to compromise your future. It may enter into my plans to give myself the appearance of having a young lover, and I should not like to see you distressed. I can swear to you by Fabrizio's happiness" — she stopped for half a minute after these words—"that never have I been guilty of any infidelity to you, and that in five, whole years. It is a long time," she said; she tried to smile; her pallid cheeks were convulsed, but her lips were unable to part. "I swear to you even that I have never either planned or wished such a thing. Now you understand that, leave me."

The Conte in despair left the palazzo Sanseverina: he could see in the Duchessa the deliberately formed intention to part from him, and never had he been so desperately in love. This is one of the points to which I am obliged frequently to revert, because they are improbable outside Italy. Returning home, he despatched as many as six different people along the road to Castelnuovo and Bologna, and gave them letters. "But that is not all," the unhappy Conte told himself: "the Prince may take it into his head to have this wretched boy executed, and that in revenge for the tone which the Duchessa adopted with him on the day of that fatal note. I felt that the Duchessa was exceeding a limit beyond which one ought never to go, and it was to compensate for this that I was so incredibly foolish as to suppress the words unjust proceedings, the only ones that bound the Sovereign. . . . But bah! Are those people bound by anything in the world? That is no doubt the greatest mistake of my life, I have risked everything that can bring me life's reward: it now remains to compensate for my folly by dint of activity and cunning; but after all, if I can obtain nothing, even by sacrificing a little of my dignity, I leave the man stranded; with his dreams of high politics, with his ideas of making himself Constitutional King of Lombardy, we shall see how he will fill my place. . . . Fabio Conti is nothing but a fool, Rassi's talent reduces itself to having a man legally hanged who is displeasing to Authority."

As soon as he had definitely made up his mind to resign from the Ministry if the rigour shewn Fabrizio went beyond that of simple detention, the Conte said to himself: “If a caprice of that man’s vanity, rashly braved, should cost me my happiness, at least I shall have my honour left. . . . By that token, since I am throwing my portfolio to the winds, I may allow myself a hundred actions which, only this morning, would have seemed to be outside the bounds of possibility. For instance, I am going to attempt everything that is humanly feasible to secure Fabrizio’s escape. . . . Great God!” exclaimed the Conte, breaking off in his soliloquy and opening his eyes wide as though at the sight of an unexpected happiness, “the Duchessa never said anything to me about an escape; can she have been wanting in sincerity for once in her life, and is the motive of her quarrel only a desire that I should betray the Prince? Upon my word, no sooner said than done!”

The Conte’s eye had recovered all its satirical sublety. “That engaging Fiscal Rassi is paid by his master for all the sentences that disgrace us throughout Europe, but he is not the sort of man to refuse to be paid by me to betray the master’s secrets. The animal has a mistress and a confessor, but the mistress is of too vile a sort for me to be able to tackle her, next day she would relate our interview to all the apple-women in the parish.” The Conte, revived by this gleam of hope, was by this time on his way to the Cathedral; astonished at the alertness of his gait, he smiled in spite of his grief: “This is what it is,” he said, “to be no longer a Minister!” This Cathedral, like many churches in Italy, serves as a passage from one street to another; the Conte saw as he entered one of the Archbishop’s Grand Vicars crossing the nave.

“Since I have met you here,” he said to him, “will you be so very good as to spare my gout the deadly fatigue of climbing to His Grace the Archbishop’s. He would be doing me the greatest favour in the world if he would be so kind as to come down to the sacristy.” The Archbishop was delighted by this message, he had a thousand things to say to the Minister on the subject of Fabrizio. But the Minister guessed that these things were no more than fine phrases, and refused to listen to any of them.

“What sort of man is Dugnani, the Vicar of San Paolo?”

“A small mind and a great ambition,” replied the Archbishop; “few scruples and extreme poverty, for we too have our vices!”

“Egad, Monsignore,” exclaimed the Minister, “you portray like Tacitus”; and he took leave of him, laughing. No sooner had he returned to his Ministry than he sent for Priore Dugnani.

“You direct the conscience of my excellent friend the Fiscal General Rassi; are you sure he has nothing to tell me?” And, without any further speech or ceremony, he dismissed Dugnani.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Conte regarded himself as out of office. “Let us see now,” he said to himself, “how many horses we shall be able to have after my disgrace, for that is what they will call my resignation.” He made a reckoning of his fortune: he had come to the Ministry with 80,000 francs to his name; greatly to his surprise, he found that, all told, his fortune at that moment did not amount to 500,000 francs: “that is an income of 20,000 lire at the most,” he said to himself. “I must admit that I am a great simpleton! There is not a citizen in Parma who does not suppose me to have an income of 150,000 lire, and the Prince, in that respect, is more of a cit than any of them. When they see me in the ditch, they will say that I know how to hide my fortune. Egad!” he cried, “if I am still Minister in three months’ time, we shall see that fortune doubled.” He found in this idea an occasion for writing to the Duchessa, which he seized with avidity, but to bespeak her pardon for a letter, seeing the terms on which they were, he filled this with figures and calculations. “We shall have only 20,000 lire of income,” he told her, “to live upon, all three of us, at Naples, Fabrizio, you and myself. Fabrizio and I shall have one saddle-horse between us.” The Minister had barely sent off his letter when the Fiscal General Rassi was announced. He received him with a stiffness which bordered on impertinence.

“What, Sir,” he said to him, “you seize and carry off from Bologna a conspirator who is under my protection; what is more, you propose to cut off his head, and you say nothing about it to me! Do you at least know the name of my successor? Is it General Conti, or yourself?”

Rassi was dumbfoundered; he was too little accustomed to good society to know whether the Conte was speaking seriously: he blushed a deep red, mumbled a few scarcely intelligible words; the Conte watched him and enjoyed his embarrassment. Suddenly Rassi pulled himself together and exclaimed, with perfect ease and with the air of Figaro caught red-handed by Almaviva:

“Faith, Signor Conte, I shan’t beat about the bush with Your Excellency: what will you give me to answer all your questions as I should those of my confessor?”

“The Cross of San Paolo” (which is the Parmesan Order) “or money, if you can find me an excuse for granting it to you.”

“I prefer the Cross of San Paolo, because it ennobles “me.”

“What, my dear Fiscal, you still pay some regard to our poor nobility?”

“If I were of noble birth,” replied Rassi with all the impudence of his trade, “the families of the people I have had hanged would hate me, but they would not feel contempt for me.”

“Very well, I will save you from their contempt,” said the Conte; “cure me of my ignorance. What do you intend to do with Fabrizio?”

“Faith, the Prince is greatly embarrassed; he is afraid that, seduced by the fine eyes of Armida — forgive my slightly bold language, they are the Sovereign’s own words — he is afraid that, seduced by a certain pair of very fine eyes, which have touched him slightly himself, you may leave him stranded, and there is no one but you to handle the question of Lombardy. I will go so far as to say,” Rassi went on, lowering his voice, “that there is a fine opportunity there for you, and one that is well worth the Cross of San Paolo which you are giving me. The Prince would grant you, as a reward from the nation, a fine estate worth 600,000 francs, which he would set apart from his own domains, or a gratuity of 300,000 scudi, if you would agree not to interfere in the affairs of Fabrizio del Dongo, or at any rate not to speak of them to him except in public.”

“I expected something better than that,” said the Conte; “not to interfere with Fabrizio means quarrelling with the Duchessa.”

“There, that is just what the Prince says: the fact is that he is horribly enraged against the Signora Duchessa, this is between ourselves; and he is afraid that, to compensate yourself for the rupture with that charming lady, now that you are a widower, you may ask him for the hand of his cousin, the old Princess Isotta, who is only fifty.”

“He has guessed aright,” exclaimed the Conte; “our master is the shrewdest man in his States.”

Never had the Conte entertained the grotesque idea of marrying this elderly Princess; nothing would less have suited a man whom the ceremonies of the court bored to death.

He began to tap with his snuff-box on the marble of a little table beside his chair. Rassi saw in this gesture of embarrassment the possibility of a fine windfall; his eye gleamed.

“As a favour, Signor Conte,” he cried, “if Your Excellency decides to accept this estate of 600,000 francs or the gratuity in money, I beg that he will not choose any other intermediary than myself. I should make an effort,” he added, lowering his voice, “to have the gratuity increased, or else to have a forest of some importance added to the land. If Your Excellency would deign to introduce a little gentleness and tact into his manner in speaking to the Prince of this youngster they’ve locked up, a Duchy might perhaps be created out of the lands which the nation’s gratitude would offer him. I repeat to Your Excellency; the Prince, for the moment, abominates the Duchessa, but he is greatly embarrassed, so much so indeed that I have sometimes thought there must be some secret consideration which he dared not confess to me. Do you know, we may find a gold mine here, I selling you his most intimate secrets, and quite openly, for I am supposed to be your sworn enemy. After all, if he is furious with the Duchessa, he believes also, and so do we all, that you are the one man in the world who can carry through all the secret negotiations with regard to the Milanese. Will Your Excellency permit me to repeat to him textually the Sovereign’s words?” said Rassi, growing heated; “there is often a character in the order of the words which no translation can render, and you may be able to see more in them than I see.”

“I permit everything,” said the Conte, as he went on, with an air of distraction, tapping the marble table with his gold snuff-box; “I permit everything, and I shall be grateful.”

“Give me a patent of hereditary nobility independently of the Cross, and I shall be more than satisfied. When I speak of ennoblement to the Prince, he

answers: ‘A scoundrel like you, noble! I should have to shut up shop next day; nobody in Parma would wish to be ennobled again.’ To come back to the business of the Milanese, the Prince said to me not three days ago: There is only that rascal to unravel the thread of our intrigues; if I send him away, or if he follows the Duchessa, I may as well abandon the hope of seeing myself one day the Liberal and beloved ruler of all Italy.’”

At this the Conte drew breath. “Fabrizio will not die,” he said to himself.

Never in his life had Rassi been able to secure an intimate conversation with the Prime Minister. He was beside himself with joy: he saw himself on the eve of being able to discard the name Rassi, which had become synonymous throughout the country with everything that was base and vile. The lower orders gave the name Rassi to mad dogs; recently more than one soldier had fought a duel because one of his comrades had called him Rassi. Not a week passed, moreover, in which this ill-starred name did not figure in some atrocious sonnet. His son, a young and innocent school-boy of sixteen, used to be driven out of the caffè on the strength of his name. It was the burning memory of all these little perquisites of his office that made him commit an imprudence. “I have an estate,” he said to the Conte, drawing his chair closer to the Minister’s; “it is called Riva. I should like to be Barone Riva.”

“Why not?” said the Minister. Rassi was beside himself.

“Very well, Signor Conte, I shall take the liberty of being indiscreet. I shall venture to guess the object of your desires; you aspire to the hand of the Princess Isotta, and it is a noble ambition. Once you are of the family, you are sheltered from disgrace, you have our man tied down. I shall not conceal from you that he has a horror of this marriage with the Princess Isotta. But if your affairs were entrusted to some skilful and well-paid person, you would be in a position not to despair of success.”

“I, my dear Barone, should despair of it; I disavow in advance everything that you can say in my name; but on the day on which that illustrious alliance comes at length to crown my wishes and to give me so exalted a position in the State, I will offer you, myself, 300,000 francs of my own money, or else recommend the Prince to accord you a mark of his favour which you yourself will prefer to that sum of money.”

The reader finds this conversation long: and yet we are sparing him more than half of it; it continued for two hours more. Rassi left the Conte's presence mad with joy; the Conte was left with a great hope of saving Fabrizio, and more than ever determined to hand in his resignation. He found that his credit stood in need of renewal by the succession to power of persons such as Rassi and General Conti; he took an exquisite delight in a possible method which he had just discovered of avenging himself on the Prince: "He may send the Duchessa away," he cried, "but, by gad, he will have to abandon the hope of becoming Constitutional King of Lombardy." (This was an absurd fantasy: the Prince had abundance of brains, but, by dint of dreaming of it, he had fallen madly in love with the idea.)

The Conte could not contain himself for joy as he hurried to the Duchessa's to give her a report of his conversation with the Fiscal. He found the door closed to him; the porter scarcely dared admit to him the fact of this order, received from his mistress's own lips. The Conte went sadly back to the ministerial palazzo; the rebuff he had just encountered completely eclipsed the joy that his conversation with the Prince's confidant had given him. Having no longer the heart to devote himself to anything, the Conte was wandering gloomily through his picture gallery when, a quarter of an hour later, he received a note which ran as follows:

"Since it is true, dear and good friend, that we are nothing more now than friends, you must come to see me only three times in the week. In a fortnight we shall reduce these visits, always so dear to my heart, to two monthly. If you wish to please me, give publicity to this apparent rupture; if you wished to pay me back almost all the love that I once felt for you, you would choose a new mistress for yourself. As for myself, I have great plans of dissipation: I intend to go a great deal into society, perhaps I shall even find a man of parts to make me forget my misfortunes. Of course, in your capacity as a friend, the first place in my heart will always be kept for you; but I do not wish, for the future, that my actions should be said to have been dictated by your wisdom; above all, I wish it to be well known that I have lost all my influence over your decisions. In a word, dear Conte, be assured that you will always be my dearest friend, but never anything else. Do not, I beg you, entertain any idea of a resumption, it is all over. Count, always, upon my friendship."

This last stroke was too much for the Conte's courage: he wrote a fine letter to the Prince resigning all his offices, and addressed it to the Duchessa with a request that she would forward it to the Palace. A moment later, he received his resignation, torn across, and on one of the blank scraps of the paper the Duchessa had condescended to write: 'No, a thousand times no!"

It would be difficult to describe the despair of the poor Minister. "She is right, I quite agree," he kept saying to himself at every moment; "my omission of the words unjust proceedings is a dreadful misfortune; it will involve perhaps the death of Fabrizio, and that will lead to my own." It was with death in his heart that the Conte, who did not wish to appear at the Sovereign's Palace before being summoned there, wrote out with his own hand the motu proprio which created Rassi Cavaliere of the Order of San Paolo and conferred on him hereditary nobility; the Conte appended to it a report of half a page which set forth to the Prince the reasons of state which made this measure advisable. He found a sort of melancholy joy in making a fair copy of each of these documents, which he addressed to the Duchessa.

He lost himself in suppositions; he tried to guess what, for the future, would be the plan of conduct of the woman he loved. "She has no idea herself," he said to himself; "one thing alone remains certain, which is that she would not for anything in the world fail to adhere to any resolution once she had announced it to me." What added still further to his unhappiness was that he could not succeed in finding that the Duchessa was to be blamed. "She has shewn me a favour in loving me; she ceases to love me after a mistake, unintentional, it is true, but one that may involve a horrible consequence; I have no right to complain." Next morning, the Conte learned that the Duchessa had begun to go into society again; she had appeared the evening before in all the houses in which parties were being given. What would have happened if they had met in the same drawing-room? How was he to speak to her? In what tone was he to address her? And how could he not speak to her?

The day that followed was a day of gloom; the rumour had gone abroad everywhere that Fabrizio was going to be put to death, the town was stirred. It was added that the Prince, having regard for his high birth, had deigned to decide that he should have his head cut off.

“It is I that am killing him,” the Conte said to himself;

“I can no longer aspire to see the Duchessa ever again.” In spite of this fairly obvious conclusion, he could not restrain himself from going three times to her door; as a matter of fact, in order not to be noticed, he went to her house on foot. In his despair, he had even the courage to write to her. He had sent for Rassi twice; the Fiscal had not shewn his face. “The scoundrel is playing me false,” the Conte said to himself.

The day after this, three great pieces of news excited the high society of Parma, and even the middle classes. The execution of Fabrizio was more certain than ever; and, a highly strange complement to this news, the Duchessa did not appear to be at all despairing. To all appearance, she bestowed only a quite moderate regret on her young lover; in any event, she made the most, with an unbounded art, of the pallor which was the legacy of a really serious indisposition, which had come to her at the time of Fabrizio’s arrest. The middle classes saw clearly in these details the hard heart of a great lady of the court. In decency, however, and as a sacrifice to the shade of the young Fabrizio, she had broken with Conte Mosca. “What immorality!” exclaimed the Jansenists of Parma. But already the Duchessa, and this was incredible, seemed disposed to listen to the flatteries of the handsomest young men at court. It was observed, among other curious incidents, that she had been very gay in a conversation with Conte Baldi, the Raversi’s reigning lover, and had teased him greatly over his frequent visits to the castello of Velleja. The lower middle class and the populace were indignant at the death of Fabrizio, which these good folk put down to the jealousy of Conte Mosca. The society of the court was also greatly taken up with the Conte, but only to laugh at him. The third of the great pieces of news to which we have referred was indeed nothing else than the Conte’s resignation; everyone laughed at a ridiculous lover who, at the age of fifty-six, was sacrificing a magnificent position to his grief at being abandoned by a heartless woman, who moreover had long ago shewn her preference for a young man. The Archbishop alone had the intelligence or rather the heart to divine that honour forbade the Conte to remain Prime Minister in a country where they were going to cut off the head, and without consulting him, of a young man who was under his protection. The news of the Conte’s resignation had the effect of curing General Fabio Conti of his gout, as we shall relate in due course, when we come to speak of the way in which poor

Fabrizio was spending his time in the citadel, while the whole town was inquiring the hour of his execution.

On the following day the Conte saw Bruno, that faithful agent whom he had dispatched to Bologna: the Conte's heart melted at the moment when this man entered his cabinet; the sight of him recalled the happy state in which he had been when he sent him to Bologna, almost in concert with the Duchessa. Bruno came from Bologna, where he had discovered nothing; he had not been able to find Lodovico, whom the podestà of Castelnuovo had kept locked up in his village prison.

"I am going to send you to Bologna," said the Conte to Bruno; "the Duchessa wishes to give herself the melancholy pleasure of knowing the details of Fabrizio's disaster. Report yourself to the brigadiere of police in charge of the station at Castelnuovo. . . .

"No!" exclaimed the Conte, breaking off in his orders; "start at once for Lombardy, and distribute money lavishly among all our correspondents. My object is to obtain from all these people reports of the most encouraging nature." Bruno, after clearly grasping the object of his mission, set to work to write his letters of credit. As the Conte was giving him his final instructions, he received a letter which was entirely false, but extremely well written; one would have called it the letter of a friend writing to a friend to ask a favour of him. The friend who wrote it was none other than the Prince. Having heard mention of some idea of resignation, he besought his friend, Conte Mosca, to retain his office; he asked him this in the name of their friendship and of the dangers that threatened the country, and ordered him as his master. He added that, the King of —— — having placed at his disposal two Cordons of his Order, he was keeping one for himself and was sending the other to his dear Conte Mosca.

"That animal is ruining me!" cried the Conte in a fury, before the astonished Bruno, "and he thinks to win me over by those same hypocritical phrases which we have planned together so many times to lime the twig for some fool." He declined the Order that was offered him, and in his reply spoke of the state of his health as allowing him but little hope of being able to carry on for much longer the arduous duties of the Ministry. The Conte was

furious. A moment later was announced the Fiscal Rassi, whom he treated like a black.

“Well! Because I have made you noble, you are beginning to shew insolence! Why did you not come yesterday to thank me, as was your bounden duty, Master Drudge?”

Rassi was a long way below the reach of insult; it was in this tone that he was daily received by the Prince; but he was anxious to be a Barone, and justified himself with spirit. Nothing was easier.

“The Prince kept me glued to a table all day yesterday; I could not leave the Palace. His Highness made me copy out in my wretched attorney’s script a number of diplomatic papers so stupid and so long-winded that I really believe his sole object was to keep me prisoner. When I was finally able to take my leave of him, about five o’clock, half dead with hunger, he gave me the order to go straight home and not to go out in the evening. As a matter of fact, I saw two of his private spies, well known to me, patrolling my street until nearly midnight. This morning, as soon as I could, I sent for a carriage which took me to the door of the Cathedral. I got down from the carriage very slowly, then at a quick pace walked through the church, and here I am. Your Excellency is at this moment the one man in the world whom I am most passionately anxious to please.”

“And I, Master Joker, am not in the least taken in by all these more or less well-constructed stories. You refused to speak to me about Fabrizio the day before yesterday; I respected your scruples and your oaths of secrecy, although oaths, to a creature like you, are at the most means of evasion. To-day, I require the truth. What are these ridiculous rumours which make out that this young man is sentenced to death as the murderer of the comedian Giletti?”

“No one can give Your Excellency a better account of those rumours, for it was I myself who started them by the Sovereign’s orders; and, I believe, it was perhaps to prevent me from informing you of this incident that he kept me prisoner all day yesterday. The Prince, who does not take me for a fool, could have no doubt that I should come to you with my Cross and ask you to fasten it in my buttonhole.”

“To the point!” cried the Minister. “And no fine speeches.”

“No doubt, the Prince would be glad to pass sentence of death on Signor del Dongo, but he has been sentenced, as you probably know, only to twenty years in irons, commuted by the Prince, on the very day after the sentence, to twelve years in a fortress, with fasting on bread and water every Friday and other religious observances.”

“It is because I knew of this sentence to imprisonment only that I was alarmed by the rumours of immediate execution which are going about the town; I remember the death of Conte Palanza, which was such a clever trick on your part.”

“It was then that I ought to have had the Cross!” cried Rassi, in no way disconcerted; “I ought to have forced him when I held him in my hand, and the man wished the prisoner killed. I was a fool then; and it is armed with that experience that I venture to advise you not to copy my example today.” (This comparison seemed in the worst of taste to his hearer, who was obliged to restrain himself forcibly from kicking Rassi.)

“In the first place,” the latter went on with the logic of a trained lawyer and the perfect assurance of a man whom no insult could offend, “in the first place there can be no question of the execution of the said del Dongo; the Prince would not dare, the times have altogether changed! Besides, I, who am noble and hope through you to become Barone, would not lend a hand in the matter. Now it is only from me, as Your Excellency knows, that the executioner of supreme penalties can receive orders, and, I swear to you, Cavaliere Rassi will never issue any such orders against Signor del Dongo.”

“And you will be acting wisely,” said the Conte with a severe air, taking his adversary’s measure.

“Let us make a distinction,” went on Rassi, smiling. “I myself figure only in the official death-roll, and if Signor del Dongo happens to die of a colic, do not go and put it down to me. The Prince is vexed, and I do not know why, with the Sanseverina.” (Three days earlier Rassi would have said “the Duchessa,” but, like everyone in the town, he knew of her breach with the Prime Minister.) The Conte was struck by the omission of her title on such

lips, and the reader may judge of the pleasure that it afforded him; he darted at Rassi a glance charged with the keenest hatred. “My dear angel,” he then said to himself, “I can shew you my love only by blind obedience to your orders.

“I must admit,” he said to the Fiscal, “that I do not take any very passionate interest in the various caprices of the Signora Duchessa; only, since it was she who introduced to me this scapegrace of a Fabrizio, who would have done well to remain at Naples and not come here to complicate our affairs, I make a point of his not being put to death in my time, and I am quite ready to give you my word that you shall be Barone in the week following his release from prison.”

“In that case, Signor Conte, I shall not be Barone for twelve whole years, for the Prince is furious, and his hatred of the Duchessa is so keen that he is trying to conceal it.”

“His Highness is too good; what need has he to conceal his hatred, since his Prime Minister is no longer protecting the Duchessa? Only I do not wish that anyone should be able to accuse me of meanness, nor above all of jealousy: it was I who made the Duchessa come to this country, and if Fabrizio dies in prison you will not be Barone, but you will perhaps be stabbed with a dagger. But let us not talk about this trifle: the fact is that I have made an estimate of my fortune, at the most I may be able to put together an income of twenty thousand lire, on which I propose to offer my resignation, most humbly, to the Sovereign. I have some hope of finding employment with the King of Naples; that big town will offer me certain distractions which I need at this moment and which I cannot find in a hole like Parma; I should stay here only in the event of your obtaining for me the hand of the Princess Isotta,” and so forth. The conversation on this subject was endless. As Rassi was rising to leave, the Conte said to him with an air of complete indifference:

“You know that people have said that Fabrizio was playing me false, in the sense that he was one of the Duchessa’s lovers; I decline to accept that rumour, and, to give it the lie, I wish you to have this purse conveyed to Fabrizio.”

“But, Signor Conte,” said Rassi in alarm, looking at the purse, “there is an enormous sum here, and the regulations. .. .”

“To you, my dear Sir, it may be enormous,” replied the Conte with an air of the most supreme contempt: “a cit like you, sending money to his friend in prison, thinks he is ruining himself if he gives him ten sequins; I, on the other hand, wish Fabrizio to receive these six thousand francs, and on no account is the Castle to know anything of the matter.”

While the terrified Rassi was trying to answer, the Conte shut the door on him with impatience. “Those fellows,” he said to himself, “cannot see power unless it is cloaked in insolence.” So saying, this great Minister abandoned himself to an action so ridiculous that we have some misgivings about recording it. He ran to take from his desk a portrait in miniature of the Duchessa, and covered it with passionate kisses. “Forgive me, my dear angel,” he cried, “if I did not fling out of the window with my own hands that drudge who dares to speak of you in a tone of familiarity; but, if I am acting with this excess of patience, it is to obey you! And he will lose nothing by waiting.”

After a long conversation with the portrait, the Conte, who felt his heart dead in his breast, had the idea of an absurd action, and dashed into it with the eagerness of a child. He sent for a coat on which his decorations were sewn and went to pay a call on the elderly Princess Isotta. Never in his life had he gone to her apartments, except on New Year’s Day. He found her surrounded by a number of dogs, and tricked out in all her finery, including diamonds even, as though she were going to court. The Conte having shewn some fear lest he might be upsetting the arrangements of Her Highness, who was probably going out, the lady replied that a Princess of Parma owed it to herself to be always in such array. For the first time since his disaster the Conte felt an impulse of gaiety. “I have done well to appear here,” he told himself, “and this very day I must make my declaration.” The Princess had been delighted to receive a visit from a man so renowned for his wit, and a Prime Minister; the poor old maid was hardly accustomed to such visitors. The Conte began by an adroit preamble, relative to the immense distance that must always separate from a plain gentleman the members of a reigning family.

“One must draw a distinction,” said the Princess: “the daughter of a King of France, for instance, has no hope of ever succeeding to the Throne; but things are not like that in the House of Parma. And that is why we Farnese must always keep up a certain dignity in externals; and I, a poor Princess such as you see me now, I cannot say that it is absolutely impossible that one day you may be my Prime Minister.”

This idea, by its fantastic unexpectedness, gave the poor Conte a second momentary thrill of perfect gaiety.

On leaving the apartments of the Princess Isotta, who had blushed deeply on receiving the avowal of the Prime Minister’s passion, he met one of the grooms from the Palace: the Prince had sent for him in hot haste.

“I am unwell,” replied the Minister, delighted at being able to play a trick on his Prince. “Oh! Oh! You drive me to extremes,” he exclaimed in a fury, “and then you expect me to serve you; but learn this, my Prince, that to have received power from Providence is no longer enough in these times: it requires great brains and a strong character to succeed in being a despot.”

After dismissing the groom from the Palace, highly scandalised by the perfect health of this invalid, the Conte amused himself by going to see the two men at court who had the greatest influence over General Fabio Conti. The one thing that made the Minister shudder and robbed him of all his courage was that the governor of the citadel was accused of having once before made away with a captain, his personal enemy, by means of the acquetta di Perugia.

The Conte knew that during the last week the Duchessa had been squandering vast sums with a view to establishing communications with the citadel; but, in his opinion, there was small hope of success; all eyes were still too wide open. We shall not relate to the reader all the attempts at corruption made by this unhappy woman: she was in despair, and agents of every sort, all perfectly devoted, were supporting her. But there is perhaps only one kind of business which is done to perfection in small despotic courts, namely the custody of political prisoners. The Duchessa’s gold had no other effect than to secure the dismissal from the citadel of nine or ten men of all ranks.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Thus, with an entire devotion to the prisoner, the Duchessa and the Prime Minister had been able to do but very little for him. The Prince was in a rage, the court as well as the public were piqued by Fabrizio, delighted to see him come to grief: he had been too fortunate. In spite of the gold which she spent in handfuls, the Duchessa had not succeeded in advancing an inch in her siege of the citadel; not a day passed but the Marchesa Raversi or Cavaliere Riscara had some fresh report to communicate to General Fabio Conti. They were supporting his weakness.

As we have already said, on the day of his imprisonment, Fabrizio was taken first of all to the governor's palazzo. This was a neat little building erected in the eighteenth century from the plans of Vanvitelli, who placed it one hundred and eighty feet above the ground, on the platform of the huge round tower. From the windows of this little palazzo, isolated on the back of the enormous tower like a camel's hump, Fabrizio could make out the country and the Alps to a great distance; he followed with his eye beneath the citadel the course of the Parma, a sort of torrent which, turning to the right four leagues from the town, empties its waters into the Po. Beyond the left bank of this river, which formed so to speak a series of huge white patches in the midst of the green fields, his enraptured eye caught distinctly each of the summits of the immense wall with which the Alps enclose Italy to the north. These summits, always covered in snow, even in the month of August which it then was, give one as it were a reminder of coolness in the midst of these scorching plains; the eye can follow them in the minutest detail, and yet they are more than thirty leagues from the citadel of Parma. This expansive view from the governor's charming palazzo is broken at one corner towards the south by the Torre Farnese, in which a room was being hastily prepared for Fabrizio. This second tower, as the reader may perhaps remember, was built on the platform of the great tower in honour of a Crown Prince who, unlike Hippolytus the son of Theseus, had by no means repelled the advances of a young stepmother. The Princess died in a few hours; the Prince's son regained his liberty only seventeen years later, when he ascended the throne on the death of his father. This Torre Farnese to which, after waiting for three

quarters of an hour, Fabrizio was made to climb, of an extremely plain exterior, rises some fifty feet above the platform of the great tower, and is adorned with a number of lightning conductors. The Prince who, in his displeasure with his wife, built this prison visible from all parts of the country, had the singular design of trying to persuade his subjects that it had been there for many years: that is why he gave it the name of Torre Farnese. It was forbidden to speak of this construction, and from all parts of the town of Parma and the surrounding plains people could perfectly well see the masons laying each of the stones which compose this pentagonal edifice. In order to prove that it was old, there was placed above the door two feet wide and four feet high which forms its entrance a magnificent bas-relief representing Alessandro Farnese, the famous general, forcing Henri IV to withdraw from Paris. This Torre Farnese, standing in so conspicuous a position, consists of a hall on the ground floor, at least forty yards long, broad in proportion and filled with extremely squat pillars, for this disproportionately large room is not more than fifteen feet high. It is used as the guard-room, and in the middle of it the staircase rises in a spiral round one of the pillars; it is a small staircase of iron, very light, barely two feet in width and wrought in filigree. By this staircase, which shook beneath the weight of the gaolers who were escorting him, Fabrizio came to a set of vast rooms more than twenty feet high, forming a magnificent first floor. They had originally been furnished with the greatest luxury for the young Prince who spent in them the seventeen best years of his life. At one end of this apartment, the new prisoner was shewn a chapel of the greatest magnificence; the walls and ceiling were entirely covered in black marble; pillars, black also and of the noblest proportions, were placed in line along the black walls without touching them, and these walls were decorated with a number of skulls in white marble, of colossal proportions, elegantly carved and supported underneath by crossbones. “There is an invention of the hatred that cannot kill,” thought Fabrizio, “and what a devilish idea to let me see it.”

An iron staircase of light filigree, similarly coiled about a pillar, gave access to the second floor of this prison, and it was in the rooms of this second floor, which were some fifteen feet in height, that for the last year General Fabio Conti had given proof of his genius. First of all, under his direction, solid bars had been fixed in the windows of these rooms, originally occupied by the Prince’s servants, and standing more than thirty feet above the stone

slabs which paved the platform of the great round tower. It was by a dark corridor, running along the middle of this building, that one approached these rooms, each of which had two windows; and in this very narrow corridor Fabrizio noticed three iron gates in succession, formed of enormous bars and rising to the roof. It was the plans, sections and elevations of all these pretty inventions that, for two years past, had entitled the General to an audience of his master every week. A conspirator placed in one of these rooms could not complain to public opinion that he was being treated in an inhuman fashion, and yet was unable to communicate with anyone in the world, or to make a movement without being heard. The General had had placed in each room huge joists of oak in the form of trestles three feet high, and this was his paramount invention, which gave him a claim to the Ministry of Police. On these trestles he had set up a cell of planks, extremely resonant, ten feet high, and touching the wall only at the side where the windows were. On the other three sides ran a little corridor four feet wide, between the original wall of the prison, which consisted of huge blocks of dressed stone, and the wooden partitions of the cell. These partitions, formed of four double planks of walnut, oak and pine, were solidly held together by iron bolts and by innumerable nails.

It was into one of these rooms, constructed a year earlier, and the masterpiece of General Fabio Conti's inventive talent, which had received the sounding title of Passive Obedience, that Fabrizio was taken. He ran to the windows. The view that one had from these barred windows was sublime: one little piece of the horizon alone was hidden, to the north-west, by the terraced roof of the governor's palazzo, which had only two floors; the ground floor was occupied by the offices of the staff; and from the first Fabrizio's eyes were attracted to one of the windows of the upper floor, in which were to be seen, in pretty cages, a great number of birds of all sorts. Fabrizio amused himself in listening to their song and in watching them greet the last rays of the setting sun, while the gaolers busied themselves about him. This aviary window was not more than five-and-twenty feet from one of his, and stood five or six feet lower down, so that his eyes fell on the birds.

There was a moon that evening, and at the moment of Fabrizio's entering his prison it was rising majestically on the horizon to the right, over the chain of the Alps, towards Treviso. It was only half past eight, and, at the other

extremity of the horizon, to the west, a brilliant orange-red sunset showed to perfection the outlines of Monviso and the other Alpine peaks which run inland from Nice towards Mont Cenis and Turin. Without a thought of his misfortunes, Fabrizio was moved and enraptured by this sublime spectacle. “So it is in this exquisite world that Clelia Conti dwells; with her pensive and serious nature, she must enjoy this view more than anyone; here it is like being alone in the mountains a hundred leagues from Parma.” It was not until he had spent more than two hours at the window, admiring this horizon which spoke to his soul, and often also letting his eyes rest on the governor’s charming palazzo, that Fabrizio suddenly exclaimed: “But is this really a prison? Is this what I have so greatly dreaded?” Instead of seeing at every turn discomforts and reasons for bitterness, our hero let himself be charmed by the attractions of his prison.

Suddenly his attention was forcibly recalled to reality by a terrifying din: his wooden cell, which was not unlike a cage and moreover was extremely resonant, was violently shaken; the barking of a dog and little shrill cries completed the strangest medley of sounds. “What now! Am I going to escape so soon?” thought Fabrizio. A moment later he was laughing as perhaps no one has ever laughed in a prison. By the General’s orders, at the same time as the gaolers there had been sent up an English dog, extremely savage, which was set to guard officers of importance, and was to spend the night in the space so ingeniously contrived all round Fabrizio’s cage. The dog and the gaoler were to sleep in the interval of three feet left between the stone pavement of the original floor and the wooden planks on which the prisoner could not move a step without being heard.

Now, when Fabrizio arrived, the room of the Passive Obedience happened to be occupied by a hundred huge rats which took flight in every direction. The dog, a sort of spaniel crossed with an English fox-terrier, was no beauty, but to make up for this shewed a great alertness. He had been tied to the stone pavement beneath the planks of the wooden room; but when he heard the rats pass close by him, he made an effort so extraordinary that he succeeded in pulling his head out of his collar. Then came this splendid battle the din of which aroused Fabrizio, plunged in the least melancholy of dreams. The rats that had managed to escape the first assault of the dog’s teeth took refuge in the wooden room, the dog came after them up the six steps which led from the stone floor to Fabrizio’s cell. Then began a really terrifying din: the cell

was shaken to its foundations. Fabrizio laughed like a madman until the tears ran down his cheeks: the gaoler Grillo, no less amused, had shut the door; the dog, in going after the rats, was not impeded by any furniture, for the room was completely bare; there was nothing to check the bounds of the hunting dog but an iron stove in one corner. When the dog had triumphed over all his enemies, Fabrizio called him, patted him, succeeded in winning his affection. “Should this fellow ever see me jumping over a wall,” he said to himself, “he will not bark.” But this far-seeing policy was a boast on his part: in the state of mind in which he was, he found his happiness in playing with this dog. By a paradox to which he gave no thought, a secret joy was reigning in the depths of his heart.

After he had made himself quite breathless by running about with the dog:

“What is your name?” Fabrizio asked the gaoler.

“Grillo, to serve Your Excellency in all that is allowed by the regulations.”

“Very well, my dear Grillo, a certain Giletti tried to murder me on the broad highway, I defended myself, and killed him; I should kill him again if it had to be done, but I wish to lead a gay life for all that so long as I am your guest. Ask for authority from your chiefs, and go and procure linen for me from the palazzo Sanseverina; also, buy me lots of nebiolo d’Asti.

This is quite a good sparkling wine which is made in Piedmont, in Alfieri’s country, and is highly esteemed, especially by the class of wine-tasters to which gaolers belong. Nine or ten of these gentlemen were engaged in transporting to Fabrizio’s wooden room certain pieces of old furniture, highly gilded, which they took from the Prince’s apartment on the first floor; all of them bore religiously in mind this recommendation of the wine of Asti. In spite of all they might do, Fabrizio’s establishment for this first night was lamentable; but he appeared shocked only by the absence of a bottle of good nebiolo. “He seems a good lad,” said the gaolers as they left him, “and there is only one thing to be hoped for, that our gentlemen will let him have plenty of money.”

When he had recovered a little from all this din and confusion: “Is it possible that this is a prison?” Fabrizio asked himself, gazing at that vast horizon

from Treviso to Monviso, the endless chain of the Alps, the peaks covered with snow, the stars, and everything, “and a first night in prison besides. I can conceive that Clelia Conti enjoys this airy solitude; here one is a thousand leagues above the pettinesses and wickednesses which occupy us down there. If those birds which are under my window there belong to her, I shall see her. . . . Will she blush when she catches sight of me?” It was while debating this important question that our hero, at a late hour of the night, fell asleep.

On the day following this night, the first spent in prison, in the course of which he never once lost his patience, Fabrizio was reduced to making conversation with Fox, the English dog; Grillo the gaoler did indeed greet him always with the friendliest expression, but a new order made him dumb, and he brought neither linen nor nebiolo.

“Shall I see Clelia?” Fabrizio asked himself as he awoke. “But are those birds hers?” The birds were beginning to utter little chirps and to sing, and at that height this was the only sound that was carried on the air. It was a sensation full of novelty and pleasure for Fabrizio, the vast silence which reigned at this height; he listened with rapture to the little chirpings, broken and so shrill, with which his neighbours the birds were greeting the day. “If they belong to her, she will appear for a moment in that room, there, beneath my window,” and, while he examined the immense chains of the Alps, against the first foothills of which the citadel of Parma seemed to rise like an advanced redoubt, his eyes returned every moment to the sumptuous cages of lemon-wood and mahogany, which, adorned with gilt wires, filled the bright room which served as an aviary. What Fabrizio did not learn until later was that this room was the only one on the second floor of the palazzo which had any shade, between eleven o’clock and four: it was sheltered by the Torre Farnese.

“What will be my dismay,” thought Fabrizio, “if, instead of those modest and pensive features for which I am waiting, and which will blush slightly perhaps if she catches sight of me, I see appear the coarse face of some thoroughly common maid, charged with the duty of looking after the birds! But if I do see Clelia, will she deign to notice me? Upon my soul, I must commit some indiscretion so as to be noticed; my position should have some privileges; besides, we are both alone here, and so far from the world! I am a

prisoner, evidently what General Conti and the other wretches of his sort call one of their subordinates. . . . But she has so much intelligence, or, I should say, so much heart, so the Conte supposes, that possibly, by what he says, she despises her father's profession; which would account for her melancholy. A noble cause of sadness! But, after all, I am not exactly a stranger to her. With what grace, full of modesty, she greeted me yesterday evening! I remember quite well how, when we met near Como, I said to her: 'One day I shall come to see your beautiful pictures at Parma; will you remember this name: Fabrizio del Dongo?' Will she have forgotten it? She was so young then!

"But by the way," Fabrizio said to himself in astonishment, suddenly interrupting the current of his thoughts, "I am forgetting to be angry. Can I be one of those stout hearts of which antiquity has furnished the world with several examples? How is this, I who was so much afraid of prison, I am in prison, and I do not even remember to be sad! It is certainly a case where the fear was a hundred times worse than the evil. What! I have to convince myself before I can be distressed by this prison, which, as Blanès says, may as easily last ten years as ten months! Can it be the surprise of all these novel surroundings that is distracting me from the grief that I ought to feel? Perhaps this good humour which is independent of my will and not very reasonable will cease all of a sudden, perhaps in an instant I shall fall into the black misery which I ought to be feeling.

"In any case, it is indeed surprising to be in prison and to have to reason with oneself in order to be unhappy. Upon my soul, I come back to my theory, perhaps I have a great character."

Fabrizio's meditations were disturbed by the carpenter of the citadel, who came to take the measurements of a screen for his windows; it was the first time that this prison had been used, and they had forgotten to complete it in this essential detail.

"And so," thought Fabrizio, "I am going to be deprived of that sublime view." And he sought to derive sadness from this privation.

"But what's this?" he cried suddenly, addressing the carpenter. "Am I not to see those pretty birds any more?"

“Ah, the Signorina’s birds, that she’s so fond of,” said the man, with a good-natured air, “hidden, eclipsed, blotted out like everything else.”

Conversation was forbidden the carpenter just as strictly as it was the gaolers, but the man felt pity for the prisoner’s youth: he informed him that these enormous shutters, resting on the sills of the two windows, and slanting upwards and away from the wall, were intended to leave the inmates with no view save of the sky. “It is done for their morals,” he told him, “to increase a wholesome sadness and the desire to amend their ways in the hearts of the prisoners; the General,” the carpenter added, “has also had the idea of taking the glass out of their windows and putting oiled paper there instead.”

Fabrizio greatly enjoyed the epigrammatic turn of this conversation, extremely rare in Italy.

“I should very much like to have a bird to cheer me, I am madly fond of them; buy me one from Signorina Clelia Conti’s maid.”

“What, do you know her,” cried the carpenter, “that you say her name so easily?”

“Who has not heard tell of so famous a beauty? But I have had the honour of meeting her several times at court.”

“The poor young lady is very dull here,” the carpenter went on; “she spends all her time there with her birds. This morning she sent out to buy some fine orange trees which they have placed by her orders at the door of the tower, under your window: if it weren’t for the cornice, you would be able to see them.” There were in this speech words that were very precious to Fabrizio; he found a tactful way of giving the carpenter money.

“I am breaking two rules at the same time,” the man told him; “I am talking to Your Excellency and taking money. The day after tomorrow, when I come back with the shutters, I shall have a bird in my pocket, and if I am not alone, I shall pretend to let it escape; if I can, I shall bring you a prayer book: you must suffer by not being able to say your office.”

“And so,” Fabrizio said to himself as soon as he was alone, “those birds are hers, but in two days more I shall no longer see them.” At this thought his eyes became tinged with regret. But finally, to his inexpressible joy, after so long a wait and so much anxious gazing, towards midday Clelia came to attend to her birds. Fabrizio remained motionless, and did not breathe; he was standing against the enormous bars of his window and pressed close to them. He observed that she did not raise her eyes to himself; but her movements had an air of embarrassment, like those of a person who knows that she is being overlooked. Had she wished to do so, the poor girl could not have forgotten the delicate smile she had seen hovering over the prisoner’s lips the day before, when the constables brought him out of the guard-room.

Although to all appearance she was paying the most careful attention to what she was doing, at the moment when she approached the window of the aviary she blushed quite perceptibly. The first thought in Fabrizio’s mind, as he stood glued to the iron bars of his window, was to indulge in the childish trick of tapping a little with his hand on those bars, and so making a slight noise; then the mere idea of such a want of delicacy horrified him. “It would serve me right if for the next week she sent her maid to look after the birds.” This delicate thought would never have occurred to him at Naples or at Novara.

He followed her eagerly with his eyes: “Obviously,” he said to himself, “she is going to leave the room without deigning to cast a glance at this poor window, and yet she is just opposite me.” But, on turning back from the farther end of the room, which Fabrizio, thanks to his greater elevation, could see quite plainly, Clelia could not help looking furtively up at him, as she approached, and this was quite enough to make Fabrizio think himself authorised to salute her. “Are we not alone in the world here?” he asked himself, to give himself the courage to do so. At this salute the girl stood still and lowered her eyes; then Fabrizio saw her raise them very slowly; and, evidently making an effort to control herself, she greeted the prisoner with the most grave and distant gesture; but she could not impose silence on her eyes: without her knowing it, probably, they expressed for a moment the keenest pity. Fabrizio remarked that she blushed so deeply that the rosy tinge ran swiftly down to her shoulders, from which the heat had made her cast off, when she came to the aviary, a shawl of black lace. The unconscious

stare with which Fabrizio replied to her glance doubled the girl's discomposure. "How happy that poor woman would be," she said to herself, thinking of the Duchessa, "if for a moment only she could see him as I see him now."

Fabrizio had had some slight hope of saluting her again as she left the room; but to avoid this further courtesy Clelia beat a skilful retreat by stages, from cage to cage, as if, at the end of her task, she had to attend to the birds nearest the door. At length she went out; Fabrizio stood motionless gazing at the door through which she had disappeared; he was another man.

>From that moment the sole object of his thoughts was to discover how he might manage to continue to see her, even when they had set up that horrible screen outside the window that overlooked the governor's palazzo.

Overnight, before going to bed, he had set himself the long and tedious task of hiding the greater part of the gold that he had in several of the rat-holes which adorned his wooden cell. "This evening, I must hide my watch. Have I not heard it said that with patience and a watch-spring with a jagged edge one can cut through wood and even iron? So I shall be able to saw through this screen." The work of concealing his watch, which occupied him for hours, did not seem to him at all long; he was thinking of the different ways of attaining his object and of what he himself could do in the way of carpentering. "If I get to work the right way," he said to himself, "I shall be able to cut a section clean out of the oak plank which will form the screen, at the end which will be resting on the window-sill; I can take this piece out and put it back according to circumstances; I shall give everything I possess to Grillo, so that he may be kind enough not to notice this little device." All Fabrizio's happiness was now involved in the possibility of carrying out this task, and he could think of nothing else. "If I can only manage to see her, I am a happy man. . . . No," he reminded himself, "she must also see that I see her." All night long his head was filled with devices of carpentering, and perhaps never gave a single thought to the court of Parma, the Prince's anger, etc., etc. We must admit that he did not think either of the grief in which the Duchessa must be plunged. He waited impatiently for the morrow; but the carpenter did not appear again: evidently he was regarded in the prison as a Liberal. They took care to send another, a sour-faced fellow who made no reply except a growl that boded ill to all the pleasant words with

which Fabrizio sought to cajole him. Some of the Duchessa's many attempts to open a correspondence with Fabrizio had been discovered by the Marchesa Raversi's many agents, and, by her, General Fabio Conti was daily warned, frightened, put on his mettle. Every eight hours six soldiers of the guard relieved the previous six in the great hall with the hundred pillars on the ground floor: in addition to these, the governor posted a gaoler on guard at each of the three successive iron gates of the corridor, and poor Grillo, the only one who saw the prisoner, was condemned to leave the Torre Farnese only once a week, at which he shewed great annoyance. He made his ill humour felt by Fabrizio, who had the sense to reply only in these words: "Plenty of good nebiolo d'Asti, my friend." And he gave him money.

"Well now, even this, which consoles us in all our troubles," exclaimed the indignant Grillo, in a voice barely loud enough to be heard by the prisoner, "we are forbidden to take, and I ought to refuse it, but I accept; however, it's money thrown away; I can tell you nothing about anything. Go on, you must be a rare bad lot, the whole citadel is upside down because of you; the Signora Duchessa's fine goings on have got three of us dismissed already."

"Will the screen be ready before midday?" This was the great question which made Fabrizio's heart throb throughout that long morning; he counted each quarter as it sounded from the citadel clock. Finally, when the last quarter before noon struck, the screen had not yet arrived; Clelia reappeared and looked after her birds. Cruel necessity had made Fabrizio's daring take such strides, and the risk of not seeing her again seemed to him so to transcend all others that he ventured, looking at Clelia, to make with his finger the gesture of sawing through the screen; it is true that as soon as she had perceived this gesture, so seditious in prison, she half bowed and withdrew.

"How now!" thought Fabrizio in amazement, "can she be so unreasonable as to see an absurd familiarity in a gesture dictated by the most imperious necessity? I meant to request her always to deign, when she is attending to her birds, to look now and again at the prison window, even when she finds it masked by an enormous wooden shutter; I meant to indicate to her that I shall do everything that is humanly possible to contrive to see her. Great God! Does this mean that she will not come tomorrow owing to that indiscreet gesture?" This fear, which troubled Fabrizio's sleep, was entirely

justified; on the following day Clelia had not apppeared at three o'clock, when the workman finished installing outside Fabrizio's windows the two enormous screens; they had been hauled up piecemeal, from the terrace of the great tower, by means of ropes and pulleys attached to the iron bars outside the windows. It is true that, hidden behind a shutter in her own room, Clelia had followed with anguish every movement of the workmen; she had seen quite plainly Fabrizio's mortal anxiety, but had nevertheless had the courage to keep the promise she had made to herself.

Clelia was a little devotee of Liberalism; in her girlhood she had taken seriously all the Liberal utterances which she had heard in the company of her father, who thought only of establishing his own position; from this she had come to feel a contempt, almost a horror for the flexible character of the courtier; whence her antipathy to marriage. Since Fabrizio's arrival, she had been racked by remorse: "And so," she said to herself, "my unworthy heart is taking the side of the people who seek to betray my father! He dares to make me the sign of sawing through a door! . . . But," she at once went on with anguish in her heart, "the whole town is talking of his approaching death! To-morrow may be the fatal day! With the monsters who govern us, what in the world is not possible? What meekness, what heroic serenity in those eyes, which perhaps are about to close for ever! God! What must be the Duchessa's anguish! They say that she is in a state of utter despair. If I were she, I would go and stab the Prince, like the heroic Charlotte Corday."

Throughout this third day of his imprisonment, Fabrizio was wild with anger, but solely at not having seen Clelia appear. "Anger for anger, I ought to have told her that I loved her," he cried; for he had arrived at this discovery. "No, it is not at all from greatness of heart that I am not thinking about prison, and am making Blanès's prophecy prove false: such honour is not mine. In spite of myself I think of that look of sweet pity which Clelia let fall on me when the constables led me out of the guard-room; that look has wiped out all my past life. Who would have said that I should find such sweet eyes in such a place, and at the moment when my own sight was offended by the faces of Barbone and the General-governor. Heaven appeared to me in the midst of those vile creatures. And how can one help loving beauty and seeking to see it again? No, it is certainly not greatness of heart that makes me indifferent to all the little vexations which prison heaps upon me." Fabrizio's imagination, passing rapidly over every possibility in

turn, arrived at that of his being set at liberty. “No doubt the Duchessa’s friendship will do wonders for me. Well, I shall thank her for my liberty only with my lips; this is not at all the sort of place to which one returns! Once out of prison, separated as we are socially, I should practically never see Clelia again! And, after all, what harm is prison doing me? If Clelia deigned not to crush me with her anger, what more should I have to ask of heaven?”

On the evening of this day on which he had not seen his pretty neighbour, he had a great idea: with the iron cross of the rosary which is given to every prisoner on his admission to prison, he began, and with success, to bore a hole in the shutter. “It is perhaps an imprudence,” he told himself before he began. “Did not the carpenters say in front of me that the painters would be coming tomorrow in their place? What will they say if they find the shutter with a hole in it? But if I do not commit this imprudence, tomorrow I shall not be able to see her. What! By my own inactivity am I to remain for a day without seeing her, and that after she has turned from me in an ill humour?” Fabrizio’s imprudence was rewarded; after fifteen hours of work he saw Clelia, and, to complete his happiness, as she had no idea that he was looking at her, she stood for a long time without moving, her gaze fixed on the huge screen; he had plenty of time to read in her eyes the signs of the most tender pity. Towards the end of the visit, she was even quite evidently neglecting her duty to her birds, to stay for whole minutes gazing at the window. Her heart was profoundly troubled; she was thinking of the Duchessa, whose extreme misfortune had inspired in her so much pity, and at the same time she was beginning to hate her. She understood nothing of the profound melancholy which had taken hold of her character, she felt out of temper with herself. Two or three times, in the course of this encounter, Fabrizio was impatient to try to shake the screen; he felt that he was not happy so long as he could not indicate to Clelia that he saw her. “However,” he told himself, “if she knew that I could see her so easily, timid and reserved as she is, she would probably slip away out of my sight.”

He was far more happy next day (out of what miseries does love create its happiness!): while she was looking sadly at the huge screen, he succeeded in slipping a tiny piece of wire through the hole which the iron cross had bored, and made signs to her which she evidently understood, at least in the sense that they implied: “I am here and I see you.”

Fabrizio was unfortunate on the days that followed. He was anxious to cut out of the colossal screen a piece of board the size of his hand, which could be replaced when he chose, and which would enable him to see and to be seen, that is to say to speak, by signs at least, of what was passing in his heart; but he found that the noise of the very imperfect little saw which he had made by notching the spring of his watch with the cross aroused Grillo, who came and spent long hours in his cell. It is true that he thought he noticed that Clelia's severity seemed to diminish as the material difficulties in the way of any communication between them increased; Fabrizio was fully aware that she no longer pretended to lower her eyes or to look at the birds when he was trying to shew her a sign of his presence by means of his wretched little piece of wire; he had the pleasure of seeing that she never failed to appear in the aviary at the precise moment when the quarter before noon struck, and he almost presumed to imagine himself to be the cause of this remarkable punctuality. Why? Such an idea does not seem reasonable; but love detects shades invisible to the indifferent eye, and draws endless conclusions from them. For instance, now that Clelia could no longer see the prisoner, almost immediately on entering the aviary she would raise her eyes to his window. These were the funereal days on which no one in Parma had any doubt that Fabrizio would shortly be put to death: he alone knew nothing; but this terrible thought never left Clelia's mind for a moment, and how could she reproach herself for the excessive interest which she felt in Fabrizio? He was about to perish — and for the cause of freedom! For it was too absurd to put a del Dongo to death for running his sword into a mummer. It was true that this attractive young man was attached to another woman! Clelia was profoundly unhappy, and without admitting to herself at all precisely the kind of interest that she took in his fate: "Certainly," she said to herself, "if they lead him out to die, I shall fly to a convent, and never in my life will I reappear in that society of the court; it horrifies me. Kid-gloved assassins!"

On the eighth day of Fabrizio's imprisonment, she had good cause to blush: she was watching fixedly, absorbed in her sorrowful thoughts, the screen that hid the prisoner's window: suddenly a small piece of the screen, larger than a man's hand, was removed by him; he looked at her with an air of gaiety, and she could see his eyes which were greeting her. She had not the strength to endure this unlooked-for trial, she turned swiftly towards her birds and began to attend to them; but she trembled so much that she spilled the water

which she was pouring out for them, and Fabrizio could perfectly well see her emotion; she could not endure this situation, and took the prudent course of running from the room.

This was the best moment in Fabrizio's life, beyond all comparison. With what transports would he have refused his freedom, had it been offered to him at that instant!

The following day was the day of the Duchessa's great despair. Everyone in the town was certain that it was all over with Fabrizio. Clelia had not the melancholy courage to show him a harshness that was not in her heart, she spent an hour and a half in the aviary, watched all his signals, and often answered him, at least by an expression of the keenest and sincerest interest; at certain moments she turned from him so as not to let him see her tears. Her feminine coquetry felt very strongly the inadequacy of the language employed: if they could have spoken, in how many different ways could she not have sought to discover what precisely was the nature of the sentiments which Fabrizio felt for the Duchessa! Clelia was now almost unable to delude herself any longer; her feeling for Signora Sanseverina was one of hatred.

One night Fabrizio began to think somewhat seriously of his aunt: he was amazed, he found a difficulty in recognising her image; the memory that he kept of her had totally changed; for him, at this moment, she was a woman of fifty. "Great God!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "how well inspired I was not to tell her that I loved her!" He had reached the point of being barely able to understand how he had found her so good looking. In this connexion little Marietta gave him the impression of a less perceptible change: this was because he had never imagined that his heart entered at all into his love for Marietta, while often he had believed that his whole heart belonged to the Duchessa. The Duchessa d'A —— and Marietta now had the effect on him of two young doves whose whole charm would be in weakness and innocence, whereas the sublime image of Clelia Conti, taking entire possession of his heart, went so far as to inspire him with terror. He felt only too well that the eternal happiness of his life was to force him to reckon with the governor's daughter, and that it lay in her power to make of him the unhappiest of men. Every day he went in mortal fear of seeing brought to a sudden end, by a caprice of her will against which there was no appeal, this

sort of singular and delicious life which he found in her presence; in any event she had already filled with joy the first two months of his imprisonment. It was the time when, twice a week, General Fabio Conti was saying to the Prince: “I can give Your Highness my word of honour that the prisoner del Dongo does not speak to a living soul, and is spending his life crushed by the most profound despair, or asleep.”

Clelia came two or three times daily to visit her birds, sometimes for a few moments only; if Fabrizio had not loved her so well, he would have seen clearly that he was loved; but he had serious doubts on this head. Clelia had had a piano put in her aviary. As she struck the notes, that the sounds of the instrument might account for her presence there, and occupy the minds of the sentries who were patrolling beneath her windows, she replied with her eyes to Fabrizio’s questions. On one subject alone she never made any answer, and indeed, on serious occasions, took flight, and sometimes disappeared for a whole day; this was when Fabrizio’s signals indicated sentiments the import of which it was too difficult not to understand: on this point she was inexorable.

Thus, albeit straitly confined in a small enough cage, Fabrizio led a fully occupied life; it was entirely devoted to seeking the solution of this important problem: “Does she love me?” The result of thousands of observations, incessantly repeated, but also incessantly subjected to doubt, was as follows: “All her deliberate gestures say no, but what is involuntary in the movement of her eyes seems to admit that she is forming an affection for me.”

Clelia hoped that she might never be brought to an avowal, and it was to avert this danger that she had repulsed, with an excessive show of anger, a prayer which Fabrizio had several times addressed to her. The wretchedness of the resources employed by the poor prisoner ought, it might seem, to have inspired greater pity in Clelia. He sought to correspond with her by means of letters which he traced on his hand with a piece of charcoal of which he had made the precious discovery in his stove; he would have formed the words letter by letter, in succession. This invention would have doubled the means of conversation, inasmuch as it would have allowed him to say actual words. His window was distant from Clelia’s about twenty-five feet; it would have been too great a risk to speak aloud over the heads of the sentries patrolling

outside the governor’s palazzo. Fabrizio was in doubt whether he was loved; if he had had any experience of love, he would have had no doubt left: but never had a woman occupied his heart; he had, moreover, no suspicion of a secret which would have plunged him in despair had he known it: there was a serious question of the marriage of Clelia Conti to the Marchese Crescenzi, the richest man at court.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

General Fabio Conti's ambition, exalted to madness by the obstacles which were occurring in the career of the Prime Minister Mosca, and seemed to forebode his fall, had led him to make violent scenes before his daughter; he told her incessantly, and angrily, that she was ruining her own prospects if she did not finally make up her mind to choose a husband; at twenty and past it was time to make a match; this cruel state of isolation, in which her unreasonable obstinacy was plunging the General, must be brought to an end, and so forth.

It was originally to escape from these continual bursts of ill humour that Clelia had taken refuge in the aviary; it could be reached only by an extremely awkward wooden stair, which his gout made a serious obstacle to the governor.

For some weeks now Clelia's heart had been so agitated, she herself knew so little what she ought to decide, that, without giving any definite promise to her father, she had almost let herself be engaged. In one of his fits of rage, the General had shouted that he could easily send her to cool her heels in the most depressing convent in Parma, and that there he would let her stew until she deigned to make a choice.

"You know that our family, old as it is, cannot muster a rent-roll of 6,000 lire, while the Marchese Crescenzi's fortune amounts to more than 100,000 scudi a year. Everyone at court agrees that he has the sweetest temper; he has never given anyone cause for complaint; he is a fine looking man, young, popular with the Prince; and I say that you ought to be shut up in a madhouse if you reject his advances. If this were the first refusal, I might perhaps put up with it, but there have been five or six suitors now, all among the first men at court, whom you have rejected, like the little fool that you are. And what would become of you, I ask you, if I were to be put on half-pay? What a triumph for my enemies, if they saw me living in some second-floor apartment, I who have so often been talked of for the Ministry! No, begad, my good nature has let me play Cassandra quite long enough. You

will kindly supply me with some valid objection to this poor Marchese Crescenzi, who is so kind as to be in love with you, to be willing to marry you without a dowry, and to make over to you a jointure of 30,000 lire a year, which will at least pay my rent; you will talk to me reasonably, or, by heaven, you will marry him in two months from now!"

One passage alone in the whole of this speech had struck Clelia; this was the threat to send her to a convent, and thereby remove her from the citadel, at the moment, moreover, when Fabrizio's life seemed to be hanging only by a thread, for not a month passed in which the rumour of his approaching death did not run afresh through the town and through the court. Whatever arguments she might use, she could not make up her mind to run this risk. To be separated from Fabrizio, and at the moment when she was trembling for his life! This was in her eyes the greatest of evils; it was at any rate the most immediate.

This is not to say that, even in not being parted from Fabrizio, her heart found any prospect of happiness; she believed him to be loved by the Duchessa, and her soul was torn by a deadly jealousy. Incessantly she thought of the advantages enjoyed by this woman who was so generally admired. The extreme reserve which she imposed on herself with regard to Fabrizio, the language of signs to which she had restricted him, from fear of falling into some indiscretion, all seemed to combine to take from her the means of arriving at any enlightenment as to his relations with the Duchessa. Thus, every day, she felt more cruelly than before the frightful misfortune of having a rival in the heart of Fabrizio, and every day she dared less to expose herself to the danger of giving him an opportunity to tell her the whole truth as to what was passing in that heart. But how charming it would be, nevertheless, to hear him make an avowal of his true feelings! What a joy for Clelia to be able to clear away those frightful suspicions which were poisoning her life!

Fabrizio was fickle; at Naples he had had the reputation of changing his mistress rather easily. Despite all the reserve imposed on the character of a young lady, since she had become a Canoness and had gone to court, Clelia, without ever asking questions, but by listening attentively, had succeeded in learning the reputation that had been made for themselves by the young men who in succession had sought her hand; very well, Fabrizio, when compared

with all these young men, was the one who was charged with being most fickle in affairs of the heart. He was in prison, he was dull, he was paying court to the one woman to whom he could speak; what more simple? What, indeed, more common? And it was this that grieved Clelia. Even if, by a complete revelation, she should learn that Fabrizio no longer loved the Duchessa, what confidence could she have in his words? Even if she believed in the sincerity of what he said, what confidence could she have in the permanence of his feelings? And lastly, to drive the final stroke of despair into her heart, was not Fabrizio already far advanced in his career as a churchman? Was he not on the eve of binding himself by lifelong vows? Did not the highest dignities await him in that walk in life? "If the least glimmer of sense remained in my mind," the unhappy Clelia said to herself, "ought I not to take flight? Ought I not to beg my father to shut me up in some convent far away? And, as a last straw, it is precisely the fear of being sent away from the citadel and shut up in a convent that is governing all my conduct! It is that fear which is forcing me to hide the truth, which is obliging me to act the hideous and degrading lie of pretending to accept the public attentions of the Marchese Crescenzi."

Clelia was by nature profoundly reasonable; in the whole of her life she had never had to reproach herself with a single unconsidered step, and her conduct on this occasion was the height of unreason: one may judge of her sufferings! They were all the more cruel in that she let herself rest under no illusion. She was attaching herself to a man who was desperately loved by the most beautiful woman at court, a woman who had so many claims to be reckoned superior to Clelia herself! And this man himself, had he been at liberty, was incapable of a serious attachment, whereas she, as she felt only too well, would never have but this one attachment in her life.

It was, therefore, with a heart agitated by the most frightful remorse that Clelia came every day to the aviary: carried to this spot as though in spite of herself, her uneasiness changed its object and became less cruel, the remorse vanished for a few moments; she watched, with indescribable beatings of her heart, for the moments at which Fabrizio could open the sort of hatch that he had made in the enormous screen which masked his window. Often the presence of the gaoler Grillo in his cell prevented him from conversing by signs with his friend.

One evening, about eleven, Fabrizio heard sounds of the strangest nature in the citadel: at night, by leaning on the window-sill and poking his head out through the hatch, he could distinguish any noise at all loud that was made on the great staircase, called “of the three hundred steps,” which led from the first courtyard, inside the round tower, to the stone platform on which had been built the governor’s palazzo and the Farnese prison in which he himself was.

About halfway up, at the hundred and eightieth step, this staircase passed from the south side of a vast court to the north side; at this point there was an iron bridge, very light and very narrow, on the middle of which a turnkey was posted. This man was relieved every six hours, and was obliged to rise and stand to one side to enable anyone to pass over the bridge which he guarded, and by which alone one could reach the governor’s palazzo and the Torre Farnese. Two turns of a spring, the key of which the governor carried on his person, were enough to hurl this iron bridge down into the court, more than a hundred feet below; this simple precaution once taken, as there was no other staircase in the whole of the citadel, and as every evening at midnight a serjeant brought to the governor’s house, and placed in a closet which was reached through his bedroom, the ropes of all the wells, he was left completely inaccessible in his palazzo, and it would have been equally impossible for anyone in the world to reach the Torre Farnese. All this Fabrizio had thoroughly observed for himself on the day of his arrival at the citadel, while Grillo who, like all gaolers, loved to boast of his prison, had explained it to him many times since; thus he had but little hope of escape. At the same time he reminded himself of a maxim of Priore Blanès: “The lover thinks more often of reaching his mistress than the husband of guarding his wife; the prisoner thinks more often of escaping than the gaoler of shutting his door; and so, whatever the obstacles may be, the lover and the prisoner ought to succeed.”

That evening Fabrizio could hear quite distinctly a considerable number of men cross the iron bridge, known as the Slave’s Bridge, because once a Dalmatian slave had succeeded in escaping, by throwing the guardian of the bridge down into the court below.

“They are coming here to carry off somebody, perhaps they are going to take me out to hang me; but there may be some disorder, I must make the most of

it." He had armed himself, he was already taking the gold from some of his hiding-places, when suddenly he stopped.

"Man is a quaint animal," he exclaimed, "I must admit! What would an invisible onlooker say if he saw my preparations? Do I by any chance wish to escape? What would happen to me the day after my return to Parma? Should I not be doing everything in the world to return to Clelia? If there is some disorder, let us profit by it to slip into the governor's palazzo; perhaps I may be able to speak to her, perhaps, encouraged by the disorder, I may venture to kiss her hand. General Conti, highly mistrustful by nature, and no less vain, has his palazzo guarded by five sentries, one at each corner of the building and a fifth outside the door, but fortunately the night is very dark." On tiptoe Fabrizio stole down to find out what the gaoler Grillo and his dog were doing: the gaoler was fast asleep in an oxhide suspended by four ropes and enclosed in a coarse net; the dog Fox opened his eyes, rose, and came quietly towards Fabrizio to lick his hand.

Our prisoner returned softly up the six steps which led to his wooden cell; the noise was becoming so loud at the foot of the Torre Farnese, and immediately opposite the door, that he thought that Grillo might easily awake. Fabrizio, armed with all his weapons, ready for action, was imagining that he was destined that night for great adventures, when suddenly he heard the most beautiful symphony in the world strike up: it was a serenade which was being given to the governor or his daughter. He was seized with a fit of wild laughter: "And I who was already dreaming of striking dagger-blows! As though a serenade were not infinitely more normal than an abduction requiring the presence of two dozen people in a prison, or than a mutiny!" The music was excellent, and seemed to Fabrizio delicious, his spirit having had no distraction for so many weeks; it made him shed very pleasant tears; in his delight he addressed the most irresistible speeches to the fair Clelia. But the following day, at noon, he found her in so sombre a melancholy, she was so pale, she directed at him a gaze in which he read at times such anger, that he did not feel himself to be sufficiently justified in putting any question to her as to the serenade; he was afraid of being impolite.

Clelia had every reason to be sad, it was a serenade given her by the Marchese Crescenzi; a step so public was in a sense the official

announcement of their marriage. Until the very day of the serenade, and until nine o'clock that evening, Clelia had set up the bravest resistance, but she had had the weakness to yield to the threat of her being sent immediately to a convent, which had been held over her by her father.

"What! I should never see him again!" she had said to herself, weeping. It was in vain that her reason had added: "I should never see again that creature who will harm me in every possible way, I should never see again that lover of the Duchessa, I should never see again that man who had ten acknowledged mistresses at Naples, and was unfaithful to them all; I should never see again that ambitious young man who, if he survives the sentence that he is undergoing, is to take holy orders! It would be a crime for me to look at him again when he is out of his citadel, and his natural inconstancy will spare me the temptation; for, what am I to him? An excuse for spending less tediously a few hours of each of his days in prison." In the midst of all this abuse, Clelia happened to remember the smile with which he had looked at the constables who surrounded him when he came out of the turnkey's office to go up to the Torre Farnese. The tears welled into her eyes: "Dear friend, what would I not do for you? You will ruin me, I know; such is my fate; I am ruining myself in a terrible fashion by listening to-night to this frightful serenade; but tomorrow, at midday, I shall see your eyes again."

It was precisely on the morrow of that day on which Clelia had made such great sacrifices for the young prisoner, whom she loved with so strong a passion; it was on the morrow of that day on which, seeing all his faults, she had sacrificed her life to him, that Fabrizio was in despair at her coldness. If, even employing only the imperfect language of signs, he had done the slightest violence to Clelia's heart, probably she would not have been able to keep back her tears, and Fabrizio would have won an avowal of all that she felt for him; but he lacked the courage, he was in too deadly a fear of offending Clelia, she could punish him with too severe a penalty. In other words, Fabrizio had no experience of the emotion that is given one by a woman whom one loves; it was a sensation which he had never felt, even in the feeblest degree. It took him a week, from the day of the serenade, to place himself once more on the old footing of simple friendship with Clelia. The poor girl armed herself with severity, being half dead with fear of betraying herself, and it seemed to Fabrizio that every day he was losing ground with her.

One day (and Fabrizio had then been nearly three months in prison without having had any communication whatever with the outer world, and yet without feeling unhappy), Grillo had stayed very late in the morning in his cell: Fabrizio did not know how to get rid of him; in the end, half past twelve had already struck before he was able to open the two little traps, a foot high, which he had carved in the fatal screen.

Clelia was standing at the aviary window, her eyes fixed on Fabrizio's; her drawn features expressed the most violent despair. As soon as she saw Fabrizio, she made him a sign that all was lost: she dashed to her piano, and, pretending to sing a recitativo from the popular opera of the season, spoke to him in sentences broken by her despair and the fear of being overheard by the sentries who were patrolling beneath the window:

"Great God! You are still alive? How grateful I am to heaven! Barbone, the gaoler whose impudence you punished on the day of your coming here, disappeared, was not to be found in the citadel; the night before last he returned, and since yesterday I have had reason to believe that he is seeking to poison you. He comes prowling through the private kitchen of the palazzo, where your meals are prepared. I know nothing for certain, but my maid thinks that the horrible creature can only be coming to the palazzo kitchens with the object of taking your life. I was dying of anxiety when I did not see you appear, I thought you were dead. Abstain from all nourishment until further notice, I shall do everything possible to see that a little chocolate comes to you. In any case, this evening at nine, if the bounty of heaven wills that you have any thread, or that you can tie strips of your linen together in a riband, let it down from your window over the orange trees, I shall fasten a cord to it which you can pull up, and by means of the cord I shall keep you supplied with bread and chocolate."

Fabrizio had carefully treasured the piece of charcoal which he had found in the stove in his cell: he hastened to make the most of Clelia's emotion, and wrote on his hand a series of letters which taken in order formed these words:

"I love you, and life is dear to me only because I see you; at all costs, send me paper and a pencil."

As Fabrizio had hoped, the extreme terror which he read in Clelia's features prevented the girl from breaking off the conversation after this daring announcement, "I love you"; she was content with exhibiting great vexation. Fabrizio was inspired to add: "There is such a wind blowing today that I can only catch very faintly the advice you are so kind as to give me in your singing; the sound of the piano is drowning your voice. What is this poison, for instance, that you tell me of?"

At these words the girl's terror reappeared in its entirety; she began in haste to trace large letters in ink on the pages of a book which she tore out, and Fabrizio was transported with joy to see at length established, after three months of effort, this channel of correspondence for which he had so vainly begged. He had no thought of abandoning the little ruse which had proved so successful, his aim was to write real letters, and he pretended at every moment not to understand the words of which Clelia was holding up each letter in turn before his eyes.

She was obliged to leave the aviary to go to her father; she feared more than anything that he might come to look for her; his suspicious nature would not have been at all satisfied with the close proximity of the window of this aviary to the screen which masked that of the prisoner. Clelia herself had had the idea a few moments earlier, when Fabrizio's failure to appear was plunging her in so deadly an anxiety, that it might be possible to throw a small stone wrapped in a piece of paper over the top of this screen; if by a lucky chance the gaoler in charge of Fabrizio happened not to be in his cell at that moment, it was a certain method of corresponding with him.

Our hero hastened to make a riband of sorts out of his linen; and that evening, shortly after nine, he heard quite distinctly a series of little taps on the tubs of the orange trees which stood beneath his window; he let down his riband, which brought back with it a fine cord of great length with the help of which he drew up first of all a supply of chocolate, and then, to his unspeakable satisfaction, a roll of paper and a pencil. It was in vain that he let down the cord again, he received nothing more; apparently the sentries had come near the orange trees. But he was wild with joy. He hastened to write Clelia an endless letter: no sooner was it finished than he attached it to the cord and let it down. For more than three hours he waited in vain for it to be taken, and more than once drew it up again to make alterations. "If Clelia

does not see my letter to-night," he said to himself, "while she is still upset by her idea of poison, tomorrow morning perhaps she will utterly reject the idea of receiving a letter."

The fact was that. Clelia had been unable to avoid going down to the town with her father; Fabrizio almost guessed as much when he heard, about half past twelve, the General's carriage return; he recognised the trot of the horses. What was his joy when, a few minutes after he had heard the General cross the terrace and the sentries present arms to him, he felt a pull at the cord which he had not ceased to keep looped round his arm! A heavy weight was attached to this cord; two little tugs gave him the signal to draw it up. He had considerable difficulty in getting the heavy object that he was lifting past a cornice which jutted out some way beneath his window.

This object which he had so much difficulty in pulling up was a flask filled with water and wrapped in a shawl. It was with ecstasy that this poor young man, who had been living for so long in so complete a solitude, covered this shawl with his kisses. But we must abandon the attempt to describe his emotion when at last, after so many days of fruitless expectation, he discovered a little scrap of paper which was attached to the shawl by a pin.

"Drink nothing but this water, live upon chocolate; tomorrow I shall do everything in the world to get some bread to you, I shall mark it on each side with little crosses in ink. It is a terrible thing to say, but you must know it, perhaps Barbone has been ordered to poison you. How is it that you did not feel that the subject of which you treat in your pencilled letter was bound to displease me? Besides, I should not write to you, but for the danger that threatens us. I have just seen the Duchessa, she is well and so is the Conte, but she has grown very thin; do not write to me again on that subject; do you wish to make me angry?"

It required a great effort of virtue on Clelia's part to write the penultimate line of this letter. Everyone alleged, in the society at court, that Signora Sanseverina was becoming extremely friendly with Conte Baldi, that handsome man, the former friend of the Marchesa Raversi. What was certain was that he had quarrelled in the most open fashion with the said Marchesa, who for six years had been a second mother to him and had established him in society.

Clelia had been obliged to begin this hasty little note over again, for, in the first draft, some allusion escaped her to the fresh amours with which popular malice credited the Duchessa.

“How base of me!” she had exclaimed, “to say things to Fabrizio against the woman he loves!”

The following morning, long before it was light, Grillo came into Fabrizio’s cell, left there a package of some weight, and vanished without saying a word. This package contained a loaf of bread of some size, adorned on every side with little crosses traced in ink: Fabrizio covered them with kisses; he was in love. Besides the bread there was a roll wrapped in a large number of folds of paper; these enclosed six hundred francs in sequins; last of all Fabrizio found a handsome breviary, quite new: a hand which he was beginning to know had traced these words on the margin:

“Poison! Beware of water, wine, everything; live upon chocolate, try to make the dog eat your untouched dinner; you must not appear distrustful, the enemy would try some other plan. Do nothing foolish, in heaven’s name! No frivolity!”

Fabrizio made haste to erase these dear words which might compromise Clelia, and to tear a large number of pages from the breviary, with the help of which he made several alphabets; each letter was properly drawn with crushed charcoal soaked in wine. These alphabets had dried when at a quarter to twelve Clelia appeared, a few feet inside the aviary window. “The great thing now,” Fabrizio said to himself, “is that she shall consent to make use of these.” But, fortunately for him, it so happened that she had a number of things to say to the young prisoner with regard to the attempt to poison him: a dog belonging to one of the maidservants had died after eating a dish that was intended for him. Clelia, so far from raising any objection to the use of the alphabets, had prepared a magnificent one for herself, in ink. The conversation carried out by these means, awkward enough in the first few moments, lasted not less than an hour and a half, that is to say all the time that Clelia was able to spend in the aviary. Two or three times, when Fabrizio allowed himself forbidden liberties, she made no answer, and turned away for a moment to give the necessary attention to her birds.

Fabrizio had obtained the concession that, in the evening, when she sent him his water, she would convey to him one" of the alphabets which she had written in ink, and which were far more visible. He did not fail to write her a very long letter in which he took care not to include anything affectionate, in a manner at least that might give offence. This plan proved successful; his letter was accepted.

Next day, in their conversation by the alphabets, Clelia made him no reproach; she told him that the danger of poison was growing less; Barbone had been attacked and almost killed by the men who were keeping company with the kitchen-maids of the governor's palazzo; probably he would not venture to appear in the kitchens again. Clelia confessed to him that, for his sake, she had dared to steal an antidote from her father; she was sending it to him; the essential thing was to refuse at once all food in which he detected an unusual taste.

Clelia had put many questions to Don Cesare without succeeding in discovering who had sent the six hundred francs which Fabrizio had received; in any case, it was an excellent sign; the severity was decreasing.

This episode of the poison advanced our hero's position enormously; he was still unable ever to obtain the least admission that resembled love, but he had the happiness of living on the most intimate terms with Clelia. Every morning, and often in the evening, there was a long conversation with the alphabets; every evening, at nine o'clock, Clelia accepted a long letter, to which she sometimes replied in a few words; she sent him the newspaper and several books; finally, Grillo had been won over to the extent of bringing Fabrizio bread and wine, which were given him every day by Clelia's maid. The gaoler Grillo had concluded from this that the governor was not acting in concert with the people who had ordered Barbone to poison the young Monsignore, and was greatly relieved, as were all his fellows, for it had become a proverb in the prison that "you had only to look Monsignor del Dongo in the face for him to give you money."

Fabrizio had grown very pale; the complete want of exercise was affecting his health; apart from this, he had never in his life been so happy. The tone of the conversation between Clelia and himself was intimate, and at times quite gay. The only moments in Clelia's life that were not besieged by grim

forebodings and remorse were those which she spent in talk with him. One day she was so rash as to say to him:

“I admire your delicacy; as I am the governor’s daughter, you never speak to me of your desire to regain your freedom!”

“That is because I take good care not to feel so absurd a desire,” was Fabrizio’s answer; “once back in Parma, how should I see you again? And life would become insupportable if I could not tell you all that is in my mind — no, not quite all that is in my mind, you take good care of that: but still, in spite of your hard-heartedness, to live without seeing you every day would be to me a far worse punishment than this prison! Never in my life have I been so happy! . . . Is it not pleasant to find that happiness was awaiting me in prison?”

“There is a great deal more to be said about that,” replied Clelia with an air which became of a sudden unduly serious and almost sinister.

“What!” cried Fabrizio, greatly alarmed, “is there a risk of my losing the tiny place I have managed to win in your heart, which constitutes my sole joy in this world?”

“Yes,” she told him; “I have good reason to believe that you are lacking in frankness towards me, although you may be regarded generally as a great gentleman; but I do not wish to speak of this today.”

This singular opening caused great embarrassment in their conversation, and often tears started to the eyes of both.

The Fiscal General Rassi was still anxious to change his name; he was tired to death of the name he had made for himself, and wished to become Barone Riva. Conte Mosca, for his part, was toiling, with all the skill of which he was capable, to strengthen in this venal judge his passion for the Barony, just as he was seeking to intensify in the Prince his mad hope of making himself Constitutional Monarch of Lombardy. They were the only means that he could invent of postponing the death of Fabrizio.

The Prince said to Rassi:

“A fortnight of despair and a fortnight of hope, it is by patiently carrying out this system that we shall succeed in subduing that proud woman’s nature; it is by these alternatives of mildness and harshness that one manages to break the wildest horses. Apply the caustic firmly.”

And indeed, every fortnight, one saw a fresh rumour come to birth in Parma announcing the death of Fabrizio in the near future. This talk plunged the unhappy Duchessa in the utmost despair. Faithful to her resolution not to involve the Conte in her downfall, she saw him but twice monthly; but she was punished for her cruelty towards that poor man by the continual alternations of dark despair in which she was passing her life. In vain did Conte Mosca, overcoming the cruel jealousy inspired in him by the assiduities of Conte Baldi, that handsome man, write to the Duchessa when he could not see her, and acquaint her with all the intelligence that he owed to the zeal of the future Barone Riva; the Duchessa would have needed (for strength to resist the atrocious rumours that were incessantly going about with regard to Fabrizio), to spend her life with a man of intelligence and heart such as Mosca; the nullity of Baldi, leaving her to her own thoughts, gave her an appalling existence, and the Conte could not succeed in communicating to her his reasons for hope.

By means of various pretexts of considerable ingenuity the Minister had succeeded in making the Prince agree to his depositing in a friendly castle, in the very heart of Lombardy, the records of all the highly complicated intrigues by means of which Ranuccio–Ernesto IV nourished the utterly mad hope of making himself Constitutional Monarch of that smiling land.

More than a score of these extremely compromising documents were in the Prince’s hand, or bore his signature, and in the event of Fabrizio’s life being seriously threatened the Conte had decided to announce to His Highness that he was going to hand these documents over to a great power which with a word could crush him.

Conte Mosca believed that he could rely upon the future Barone Riva, he was afraid only of poison; Barbone’s attempt had greatly alarmed him, and to such a point that he had determined to risk taking a step which, to all appearance, was an act of madness. One morning he went to the gate of the citadel and sent for General Fabio Conti, who came down as far as the

bastion above the gate; there, strolling with him in a friendly fashion, he had no hesitation in saying to him, after a short preamble, acidulated but polite:

“If Fabrizio dies in any suspicious manner, his death may be put down to me; I shall get a reputation for jealousy, which would be an absurd and abominable stigma and one that I am determined not to accept. So, to clear myself in the matter, if he dies of illness, I shall kill you with my own hand; you may count on that.” General Fabio Conti made a magnificent reply and spoke of his bravery, but the look in the Conte’s eyes remained present in his thoughts.

A few days later, as though he were working in concert with the Conte, the Fiscal Rassi took a liberty which was indeed singular in a man of his sort. The public contempt attached to his name, which was proverbial among the rabble, had made him ill since he had acquired the hope of being able to change it. He addressed to General Fabio Conti an official copy of the sentence which condemned Fabrizio to twelve years in the citadel. According to the law, this was what should have been done on the very day after Fabrizio’s admission to prison; but what was unheard-of at Parma, in that land of secret measures, was that Justice should allow itself to take such a step without an express order from the Sovereign. How indeed could the Prince entertain the hope of doubling every fortnight the Duchessa’s alarm, and of subduing that proud spirit, to quote his own words, once an official copy of the sentence had gone out from the Chancellory of Justice? On the day before that on which General Fabio Conti received the official document from the Fiscal Rassi, he learned that the clerk Barbone had been beaten black and blue on returning rather late to the citadel; he concluded from this that there was no longer any question, in a certain quarter, of getting rid of Fabrizio; and, in a moment of prudence which saved Rassi from the immediate consequences of his folly, he said nothing to the Prince, at the next audience which he obtained of him, of the official copy of Fabrizio’s sentence which had been transmitted to him. The Conte had discovered, happily for the peace of mind of the unfortunate Duchessa, that Barbone’s clumsy attempt had been only an act of personal revenge, and had caused the clerk to be given the warning of which we have spoken.

Fabrizio was very agreeably surprised when, after one hundred and thirty-five days of confinement in a distinctly narrow cell, the good chaplain Don

Cesare came to him one Thursday to take him for an airing on the dungeon of the Torre Farnese: he had not been there ten minutes before, unaccustomed to the fresh air, he began to feel faint.

Don Cesare made this accident an excuse to allow him half an hour's exercise every day. This was a mistake: these frequent airings soon restored to our hero a strength which he abused.

There were several serenades; the punctilious governor allowed them only because they created an engagement between the Marchese Crescenzi and his daughter Clelia, whose character alarmed him; he felt vaguely that there was no point of contact between her and himself, and was always afraid of some rash action on her part. She might fly to the convent, and he would be left helpless. At the same time, the General was afraid that all this music, the sound of which could penetrate into the deepest dungeons, reserved for the blackest Liberals, might contain signals. The musicians themselves, too, made him suspicious; and so no sooner was the serenade at an end than they were locked into the big rooms below the governor's palazzo, which by day served as an office for the staff, and the door was not opened to let them out until the following morning, when it was broad daylight. It was the governor himself who, stationed on the Slave's Bridge, had them searched in his presence and gave them their liberty, not without several times repeating that he would have hanged at once any of them who had the audacity to undertake the smallest commission for any prisoner. And they knew that, in his fear of giving offence, he was a man of his word, so that the Marchese Crescenzi was obliged to pay his musicians at a triple rate, they being greatly upset at thus having to spend a night in prison.

All that the Duchessa could obtain, and that with great difficulty, from the pusillanimity of one of these men was that he should take with him a letter to be handed to the governor. The letter was addressed to Fabrizio: the writer deplored the fatality which had brought it about that, after he had been more than five months in prison, his friends outside had not been able to establish any communication with him.

On entering the citadel, the bribed musician flung himself at the feet of General Fabio Conti, and confessed to him that a priest, unknown to him, had so insisted upon his taking a letter addressed to Signor del Dongo that he

had not dared to refuse; but, faithful to his duty, he was hastening to place it in His Excellency's hands.

His Excellency was highly flattered: he knew the resources at the Duchessa's disposal, and was in great fear of being hoaxed. In his joy, the General went to submit this letter to the Prince, who was delighted.

"So, the firmness of my administration has brought me my revenge! That proud woman has been suffering for more than six months! But one of these days we are going to have a scaffold erected, and her wild imagination will not fail to believe that it is intended for young del Dongo."

CHAPTER TWENTY

One night, about one o'clock in the morning, Fabrizio, leaning upon his window-sill, had slipped his head through the door cut in his screen and was contemplating the stars and the immense horizon which one enjoyed from the summit of the Torre Farnese. His eyes, roaming over the country in the direction of the lower Po and Ferrara, noticed quite by chance an extremely small but quite brilliant light which seemed to be shining from the top of a tower. "That light cannot be visible from the plain," Fabrizio said to himself, "the bulk of the tower prevents it from being seen from below; it will be some signal for a distant point." Suddenly he noticed that this light kept on appearing and disappearing at very short intervals. "It is some girl speaking to her lover in the next village." He counted nine flashes in succession. "That is an I," he said, "I being the ninth letter of the alphabet." There followed, after a pause, fourteen flashes: "That is N"; then, after another pause, a single flash: "It is an A; the word is Ina."

What were his joy and surprise when the next series of flashes, still separated by short pauses, made up the following words:

INA PENSA A TE

Evidently, "Gina is thinking of you!"

He replied at once by flashing his own lamp through the smaller of the holes that he had made:

FABRIZIO T'AMA ("Fabrizio loves you!")

The conversation continued until daybreak. This night was the one hundred and seventy-third of his imprisonment, and he was informed that for four months they had been making these signals every night. But anyone might see and read them; they began from this night to establish a system of abbreviations: three flashes in very quick succession meant the Duchessa; four, the Prince; two, Conte Mosca; two quick flashes followed by two slow

ones meant escape. They agreed to use in future the old alphabet alla Monaca, which, so as not to be understood by unauthorised persons, changes the ordinary sequence of the letters, and gives them arbitrary values: A, for instance, is represented by 10, B by Z; that is to say three successive interruptions of the flash mean B, ten successive interruptions A, and so on; an interval of darkness separates the words. An appointment was made for the following night at one o'clock, and that night the Duchessa came to the tower, which was a quarter of a league from the town. Her eyes filled with tears as she saw the signals made by the Fabrizio whom she had so often imagined dead. She told him herself, by flashes of the lamp: "I love you — courage — health — hope. Exercise your strength in your cell, you will need the strength of your arms. — I have not seen him," she said to herself, "since that concert with Fausta, when he appeared at the door of my drawing-room dressed as a chasseur. Who would have said then what a fate was in store for him?"

The Duchessa had signals made which informed Fabrizio that presently he would be released THANKS TO THE PRINCE'S BOUNTY (these signals might be intercepted); then she returned to messages of affection; she could not tear herself from him. Only the representations made by Lodovico, who, because he had been of use to Fabrizio, had become her factotum, could prevail upon her, when day was already breaking, to discontinue signals which might attract the attention of some ill-disposed person. This announcement, several times repeated, of an approaching release, cast Fabrizio into a profound sorrow. Clelia, noticing this next day, was so imprudent as to inquire the cause of it.

"I can see myself on the point of giving the Duchessa serious grounds for displeasure."

"And what can she require of you that you would refuse her?" exclaimed Clelia, carried away by the most lively curiosity.

"She wishes me to leave this place," was his answer, "and that is what I will never consent to do."

Clelia could not reply: she looked at him and burst into tears. If he had been able to speak to her face to face, then perhaps he would have received her

avowal of feelings, his uncertainty as to which often plunged him in a profound discouragement; he felt keenly that life without Clelia's love could be for him only a succession of bitter griefs or intolerable tedium. He felt that it was no longer worth his while to live to rediscover those same pleasures that had seemed to him interesting before he knew what love was, and, albeit suicide has not yet become fashionable in Italy, he had thought of it as a last resource, if fate were to part him from Clelia. Next day he received a long letter from her:

"You must, my friend, be told the truth: over and over again, since you have been here, it has been believed in Parma that your last day had come. It is true that you were sentenced only to twelve years in a fortress; but it is, unfortunately, impossible to doubt that an all-powerful hatred is bent on your destruction, and a score of times I have trembled for fear that poison was going to put an end to your days: you must therefore seize every possible means of escaping from here. You see that for your sake I am neglecting the most sacred duties; judge of the imminence of the danger by the things which I venture to say to you, and which are so out of place on my lips. If it is absolutely necessary, if there is no other way of safety, fly. Every moment that you spend in this fortress may put your life in the greatest peril; bear in mind that there is a party at court whom the prospect of crime has never deterred from carrying out their designs. And do you not see all the plans of that party constantly circumvented by the superior skill of Conte Mosca? Very well, they have found a sure way of banishing him from Parma, it is the Duchessa's desperation; and are they not only too sure of bringing about the desperation by the death of a certain young prisoner? This point alone, which is unanswerable, ought to make you form a judgment of your situation. You say that you feel friendship for me: think, first of all, that insurmountable obstacles must prevent that feeling from ever becoming at all definite between us. We may have met in our youth, we may each have held out a helping hand to the other in a time of trouble; fate may have set me in this grim place that I might lighten your suffering; but I should never cease to reproach myself if illusions, which nothing justifies or will ever justify, led you not to seize every possible opportunity of removing your life from so terrible a peril. I have lost all peace of mind through the cruel folly I have committed in exchanging with you certain signs of open friendship. If our childish pastimes, with alphabets, led you to form illusions which are so little warranted and which may be so fatal to yourself, it would be vain for

me to seek to justify myself by reminding you of Barbone's attempt. I should be casting you myself into a far more terrible, far more certain peril, when I thought only to protect you from a momentary danger; and my imprudences are for ever unpardonable if they have given rise to feelings which may lead you to resist the Duchessa's advice. See what you oblige me to repeat to you: save yourself, I command you. . . ."

This letter was very long; certain passages, such as the I command you which we have just quoted, gave moments of exquisite hope to Fabrizio's love; it seemed to him that the sentiments underlying the words were distinctly tender, if the expressions used were remarkably prudent. In other instances he paid the penalty for his complete ignorance of this kind of warfare; he saw only simple friendship, or even a very ordinary humanity in this letter from Clelia.

Otherwise, nothing that she told him made him change his intentions for an instant: supposing that the perils which she depicted were indeed real, was it extravagant to purchase, with a few momentary dangers, the happiness of seeing her every day? What sort of life would he lead when he had fled once again to Bologna or to Florence? For, if he escaped from the citadel, he certainly could not hope for permission to live in Parma. And even so, when the Prince should change his mind sufficiently to set him at liberty (which was so highly improbable since he, Fabrizio, had become, for a powerful faction, one of the means of overthrowing Conte Mosca), what sort of life would he lead in Parma, separated from Clelia by all the hatred that divided the two parties? Once or twice in a month, perhaps, chance would place them in the same drawing-room; but even then, what sort of conversation could he hold with her? How could he recapture that perfect intimacy which, every day now, he enjoyed for several hours? What would be the conversation of the drawing-room, compared with that which they made by alphabets? "And, if I must purchase this life of enjoyment and this unique chance of happiness with a few little dangers, where is the harm in that? And would it not be a further happiness to find thus a feeble opportunity of giving her a proof of my love?"

Fabrizio saw nothing in Clelia's letter but an excuse for asking her for a meeting; it was the sole and constant object of all his desires. He had spoken

to her of it once only, and then for an instant, at the moment of his entry into prison; and that was now more than two hundred days ago.

An easy way of meeting Clelia offered itself: the excellent Priore Don Cesare allowed Fabrizio half an hour's exercise on the terrace of the Torre Farnese every Thursday, during the day; but on the other days of the week this airing, which might be observed by all the inhabitants of Parma and the neighbouring villages, and might seriously compromise the governor, took place only at nightfall. To climb to the terrace of the Torre Farnese there was no other stair but that of the little belfry belonging to the chapel so lugubriously decorated in black and white marble, which the reader may perhaps remember. Grillo escorted Fabrizio to this chapel, and opened the little stair to the belfry for him: his duty would have been to accompany him; but, as the evenings were growing cold, the gaoler allowed him to go up by himself, locking him into this belfry which communicated with the terrace, and went back to keep warm in his cell. Very well; one evening, could not Clelia contrive to appear, escorted by her maid, in the black marble chapel?

The whole of the long letter in which Fabrizio replied to Clelia's was calculated to obtain this meeting. Otherwise, he confided to her, with perfect sincerity, and as though he were writing of someone else, all the reasons which made him decide not to leave the citadel.

"I would expose myself every day to the prospect of a thousand deaths to have the happiness of speaking to you with the help of our alphabets, which now never defeat us for a moment, and you wish me to be such a fool as to exile myself in Parma, or perhaps at Bologna, or even at Florence! You wish me to walk out of here so as to be farther from you! Understand that any such effort is impossible for me; it would be useless to give you my word, I could never keep it."

The result of this request for a meeting was an absence on the part of Clelia which lasted for no fewer then five days; for five days she came to the aviary only at times when she knew that Fabrizio could not make use of the little opening cut in the screen. Fabrizio was in despair; he concluded from this absence that, despite certain glances which had made him conceive wild hopes, he had never inspired in Clelia any sentiments other than those of a simple friendship. "In that case," he asked himself, "what good is life to me?

Let the Prince take it from me, he will be welcome; another reason for not leaving the fortress." And it was with a profound feeling of disgust that, every night, he replied to the signals of the little lamp. The Duchessa thought him quite mad when she read, on the record of the messages which Lodovico brought to her every morning, these strange words: "I do not wish to escape; 1 wish to die here!"

During these five days, so cruel for Fabrizio, Clelia was more unhappy than he; she had had the idea, so poignant for a generous nature: "My duty is to take refuge in a convent, far from the citadel; when Fabrizio knows that I am no longer here, and I shall make Grillo and all the gaolers tell him, then he will decide upon an attempt at escape." But to go to a convent was to abandon for ever all hope of seeing Fabrizio again; and how abandon that hope, when he was furnishing so clear a proof that the sentiments which might at one time have attached him to the Duchessa no longer existed? What more touching proof of love could a young man give? After seven long months in prison, which had seriously affected his health, he refused to regain his liberty. A fickle creature, such as the talk of the courtiers had portrayed Fabrizio in Clelia's eyes as being, would have sacrificed a score of mistresses rather than remain another day in the citadel, and what would such a man not have done to escape from a prison in which, at any moment, poison might put an end to his life?

Clelia lacked courage; she made the signal mistake of not seeking refuge in a convent, a course which would at the same time have furnished her with a quite natural means of breaking with the Marchese Crescenzi. Once this mistake was made, how was she to resist this young man — so lovable, so natural, so tender — who was exposing his life to frightful perils to gain the simple pleasure of looking at her from one window to another? After five days of terrible struggles, interspersed with moments of self-contempt, Clelia made up her mind to reply to the letter in which Fabrizio begged for the pleasure of speaking to her in the black marble chapel. To tell the truth, she refused, and in distinctly firm language; but from that moment all peace of mind was lost for her; at every instant her imagination portrayed to her Fabrizio succumbing to the attack of the poisoner; she came six or eight times in a day to her aviary, she felt the passionate need of assuring herself with her own eyes that Fabrizio was alive.

“If he is still in the fortress,” she told herself, “if he is exposed to all the horrors which the Raversi faction are perhaps plotting against him with the object of getting rid of Conte Mosca, it is solely because I have had the cowardice not to fly to the convent! What excuse could he have for remaining here once he was certain that I had gone for ever?”

This girl, at once so timid and so proud, brought herself to the point of running the risk of a refusal on the part of the gaoler Grillo; what was more, she exposed herself to all the comments which the man might allow himself to make on the singularity of her conduct. She stooped to the degree of humiliation involved in sending for him, and telling him in a tremulous voice which betrayed her whole secret that within a few days Fabrizio was going to obtain his freedom, that the Duchessa Sanseverina, in the hope of this, was taking the most active measures, that often it was necessary to have without a moment’s delay the prisoner’s answer to certain proposals which might be made, and that she wished him, Grillo, to allow Fabrizio to make an opening in the screen which masked his window, so that she might communicate to him by signs the instructions which she received several times daily from Signora Sanseverina.

Grillo smiled and gave her an assurance of his respect and obedience. Clelia felt a boundless gratitude to him because he said nothing; it was evident that he knew quite well all that had been going on for the last few months.

Scarcely had the gaoler left her presence when Clelia made the signal by which she had arranged to call Fabrizio upon important occasions; she confessed to him all that she had just been doing. “You wish to perish by poison,” she added: “I hope to have the courage, one of these days, to leave my father and escape to some remote convent. I shall be indebted to you for that; then I hope that you will no longer oppose the plans that may be proposed to you for getting you away from here. So long as you are in prison, I have frightful and unreasonable moments; never in my life have I contributed to anyone’s hurt, and I feel that I am to be the cause of your death. Such an idea in the case of a complete stranger would fill me with despair; judge of what I feel when I picture to myself that a friend, whose unreasonableness gives me serious cause for complaint, but whom, after all, I have been seeing every day for so long, is at this very moment a victim to

the pangs of death. At times I feel the need to know from your own lips that you are alive.

“It was to escape from this frightful grief that I have just lowered myself so far as to ask a favour of a subordinate who might have refused it me, and may yet betray me. For that matter, I should perhaps be happy were he to come and denounce me to my father; at once I should leave for the convent, I should no longer be the most unwilling accomplice of your cruel folly. But, believe me, this cannot go on for long, you will obey the Duchessa’s orders. Are you satisfied, cruel friend? It is I who am begging you to betray my father. Call Grillo, and give him a present.”

Fabrizio was so deeply in love, the simplest expression of Clelia’s wishes plunged him in such fear that even this strange communication gave him no certainty that he was loved. He summoned Grillo, whom he paid generously for his services in the past, and, as for the future, told him that for every day on which he allowed him to make use of the opening cut in the screen, he should receive a sequin. Grillo was delighted with these terms.

“I am going to speak to you with my hand on my heart, Monsignore; will you submit to eating your dinner cold every day? It is a very simple way of avoiding poison. But I ask you to use the utmost discretion; a gaoler has to see everything and know nothing,” and so on. “Instead of one dog, I shall have several, and you yourself will make them taste all the dishes that you propose to eat; as for wine, I will give you my own, and you will touch only the bottles from which I have drunk. But if Your Excellency wishes to ruin me for ever, he has merely got to repeat these details even to Signorina Clelia; women will always be women; if tomorrow she quarrels with you, the day after, to have her revenge, she will tell the whole story to her father, whose greatest joy would be to find an excuse for having a gaoler hanged. After Barbone, he is perhaps the wickedest creature in the fortress, and that is where the real danger of your position lies; he knows how to handle poison, you may be sure of that, and he would never forgive me this idea of having three or four little dogs.”

There was another serenade. This time Grillo answered all Fabrizio’s questions: he had indeed promised himself always to be prudent, and not to betray Signorina Clelia, who according to him, while on the point of

marrying the Marchese Crescenzi, the richest man in the States of Parma, was nevertheless making love, so far as the prison walls allowed, to the charming Monsignore del Dongo. He had answered the latter's final questions as to the serenade, when he was fool enough to add: "They think that he will marry her soon." One may judge of the effect of this simple statement on Fabrizio.

That night he replied to the signals of the lamp only to say that he was ill. The following morning, at ten o'clock, Clelia having appeared in the aviary, he asked her in a tone of ceremonious politeness which was quite novel between them, why she had not told him frankly that she was in love with the Marchese Crescenzi, and that she was on the point of marrying him.

"Because there is not a word of truth in the story," replied Clelia with impatience. It is true, however, that the rest of her answer was less precise: Fabrizio pointed this out to her, and took advantage of it to repeat his request for a meeting. Clelia, seeing a doubt cast on her sincerity, granted his request almost at once, reminding him at the same time that she was dishonouring herself for ever in Grillo's eyes. That evening, when it was quite dark, she appeared, accompanied by her maid, in the black marble chapel; she stopped in the middle, by the sanctuary lamp; the maid and Grillo retired thirty paces towards the door. Clelia, who was trembling all over, had prepared a fine speech: her object was to make no compromising admission, but the logic of passion is insistent; the profound interest which it feels in knowing the truth does not allow it to keep up vain pretences, while at the same time the extreme devotion that it feels to the object of its love takes from it the fear of giving offence. Fabrizio was dazzled at first by Clelia's beauty; for nearly eight months he had seen no one at such close range except gaolers. But the name of the Marchese Crescenzi revived all his fury, it increased when he saw quite clearly that Clelia was answering him only with tactful circumspection; Clelia herself realised that she was increasing his suspicions instead of dissipating them. This sensation was too cruel for her to bear.

"Will you be really glad," she said to him with a sort of anger and with tears in her eyes, "to have made me exceed all the bounds of what I owe to myself? Until the third of August last year I had never felt anything but aversion towards the men who sought to attract me. I had a boundless and probably exaggerated contempt for the character of the courtier, everyone

who flourished at that court revolted me. I found, on the other hand, singular qualities in a prisoner who, on the third of August, was brought to this citadel. I felt, without noticing them at first, all the torments of jealousy. The attractions of a charming woman, and one whom I knew well, were like daggers thrust into my heart, because I believed, and I am still inclined to believe that this prisoner was attached to her. Presently the persecutions of the Marchese Crescenzi, who had sought my hand, were redoubled; he is extremely rich, and we have no fortune. I was rejecting them with the greatest boldness when my father uttered the fatal word convent; I realised that, if I left the citadel, I would no longer be able to watch over the life of the prisoner in whose fate I was interested. The triumph of my precautions had been that until that moment he had not the slightest suspicion of the appalling dangers that were threatening his life. I had promised myself never to betray either my father or my secret; but that woman of an admirable activity, a superior intelligence, a terrible will, who is protecting this prisoner, offered him, or so I suppose, means of escape: he rejected them, and sought to persuade me that he was refusing to leave the citadel in order not to be separated from me. Then I made a great mistake, I fought with myself for five days; I ought at once to have fled to the convent and to have left the fortress: that course offered me a very simple method of breaking with the Marchese Crescenzi. I had not the courage to leave the fortress, and I am a ruined girl: I have attached myself to a fickle man: I know what his conduct was at Naples; and what reason should I have to believe that his character has altered? Shut up in a harsh prison, he has paid his court to the one woman he could see; she has been a distraction from the dulness of his life. As he could speak to her only with a certain amount of difficulty, this amusement has assumed the false appearance of a passion. This prisoner, having made a name for himself in the world by his courage, imagines himself to be proving that his love is something more than a passing fancy by exposing himself to considerable dangers in order to continue to see the person whom he thinks that he loves. But as soon as he is in a big town, surrounded once more by the seductions of society, he will once more become what he has always been, a man of the world given to dissipation, to gallantry; and his poor prison companion will end her days in a convent, forgotten by this light-hearted creature, and with the undying regret that she has made him an avowal.”

This historic speech, of which we give only the principal points, was, as one may imagine, interrupted a score of times by Fabrizio. He was desperately in love; also he was perfectly convinced that he had never loved before seeing Clelia, and that the destiny of his life was to live for her alone.

The reader will no doubt imagine the fine speeches that he was making when the maid warned her mistress that half past eleven had struck, and that the General might return at any moment; the parting was cruel.

“I am seeing you perhaps for the last time,” said Celia to the prisoner: “a proceeding which is evidently in the interest of the Raversi cabal may furnish you with a cruel fashion of proving that you are not inconstant.” Clelia parted from Fabrizio choked by her sobs and dying with shame at not being able to hide them entirely from her maid, nor, what was worse, from the gaoler Grillo. A second conversation was possible only when the General should announce his intention of spending an evening in society: and as, since Fabrizio’s imprisonment, and the interest which it inspired in the curious courtiers, he had found it prudent to afflict himself with an almost continuous attack of gout, his excursions to the town, subjected to the requirements of an astute policy, were decided upon often only at the moment of his getting into the carriage.

After this evening in the marble chapel, Fabrizio’s life was a succession of transports of joy. Serious obstacles, it was true, seemed still to stand in the way of his happiness; but now at last he had that supreme and scarcely hoped-for joy of being loved by the divine creature who occupied all his thoughts.

On the third evening after this conversation, the signals from the lamp finished quite early, almost at midnight; at the moment of their coming to an end Fabrizio almost had his skull broken by a huge ball of lead which, thrown over the top of the screen of his window, came crashing through its paper panes and fell into his room.

This huge ball was not nearly so heavy as appeared from its size. Fabrizio easily succeeded in opening it, and found inside a letter from the Duchessa. By the intervention of the Archbishop, to whom she paid sedulous attention, she had won over to her side a soldier in the garrison of the citadel. This

man, a skilled slinger, had eluded the sentries posted at the corners and outside the door of the governor's palazzo, or had come to terms with them.

"You must escape with cords: I shudder as I give you this strange advice, I have been hesitating, for two whole months and more, to tell you this; but the official outlook grows darker every day, and one must be prepared for the worst. This being so, start signalling again at once with your lamp, to shew us that you have received this letter; send P — B — G ala Monaca, that is four, three and two: I shall not breathe until I have seen this signal. I am on the tower, we shall answer N — O, that is seven and five. On receiving the answer send no other signal, and attend to nothing but the meaning of my letter."

Fabrizio made haste to obey and sent the arranged signals, which were followed by the promised reply; then he went on reading the letter:

"We may be prepared for the worst; so I have been told by the three men in whom I have the greatest confidence, after I had made them swear on the Gospel that they would tell me the truth, however cruel it might be to me. The first of these men threatened the surgeon who betrayed you at Ferrara that he would fall upon him with an open knife in his hand; the second told you, on your return from Belgirate, that it would have been more strictly prudent to take your pistol and shoot the footman who came singing through the wood leading a fine horse, but a trifle thin; you do not know the third: he is a highway robber of my acquaintance, a man of action if ever there was one, and as full of courage as yourself; that is chiefly why I asked him to tell me what you ought to do. All three of them assured me, without knowing, any of them, that I was consulting the other two, that it was better to risk breaking your neck than to spend eleven years and four months in the continual fear of a highly probable poison.

"You must for the next month practise in your cell climbing up and down on a knotted cord. Then, on the night of some festa when the garrison of the citadel will have received an extra ration of wine, you will make the great attempt; you shall have three cords of silk and canvas, of the thickness of a swan's quill, the first of eighty feet to come down the thirty-five feet from the window to the orange trees; the second of three hundred feet, and that is where the difficulty will be on account of the weight, to come down the

hundred and eighty feet which is the height of the wall of the great tower; a third of thirty feet will help you to climb down the rampart. I spend my life studying the great wall from the east, that is from the direction of Ferrara: a gap due to an earthquake has been filled by means of a buttress which forms an inclined plane. My highway robber assures me that he would undertake to climb down on that side without any great difficulty and at the risk only of a few scratches, by letting himself slide along the inclined plane formed by this buttress. The vertical drop is no more than twenty-eight feet, right at the bottom: that side is the least carefully guarded.

"However, all things considered, my robber, who has escaped three times from prison, and whom you would love if you knew him, though he abominates people of your class; my highway robber, I say, as agile and nimble as yourself, thinks that he would rather come down on the west side, exactly opposite the little palazzo formerly occupied by Fausta, which you know well. What would make him choose that side is that the wall, although very slightly inclined, is covered almost all the way down with shrubs; there are twigs on it, as thick as your little finger, which may easily scratch you if you do not take care, but are also excellent things to hold on to. Only this morning I examined this west side with an excellent telescope: the place to choose is precisely beneath a new stone which was fixed in the parapet two or three years ago. Directly beneath this stone you will find first of all a bare space of some twenty feet; you must go very slowly down this (you can imagine how my heart shudders in giving you these terrible instructions, but courage consists in knowing how to choose the lesser evil, frightful as it may be); after the bare space, you will find eighty or ninety feet of quite big shrubs, out of which one can see birds flying, then a space of thirty feet where there is nothing but grass, wall-flowers and creepers. Then, as you come near the ground, twenty feet of shrubs, and last of all twenty-five or thirty feet recently plastered.

"What would make me choose this side is that there, directly underneath the new stone in the parapet on top, there is a wooden hut built by a soldier in his garden, which the engineer captain employed at the fortress is trying to force him to pull down; it is seventeen feet high, and is roofed with thatch, and the roof touches the great wall of the citadel. It is this roof that tempts me; in the dreadful event of an accident, it would break your fall. Once you have reached this point, you are within the circle of the ramparts, which are

none too carefully guarded; if they arrest you there, fire your pistol and put up a fight for a few minutes. Your friend of Ferrara and another stout-hearted man, he whom I call the highway robber, will have ladders, and will not hesitate to scale this quite low rampart, and fly to your rescue.

“The rampart is only twenty-three feet high, and is built on an easy slope. I shall be at the foot of this last wall with a good number of armed men.

“I hope to be able to send you five or six letters by the same channel as this. I shall continue to repeat the same things in different words, so that we may fully understand one another. You can guess with what feelings I tell you that the man who said: ‘Shoot the footman,’ who, after all, is the best of men, and is dying of compunction, thinks that you will get away with a broken arm. The highway robber, who has a wider experience of this sort of expedition, thinks that, if you will climb down very carefully, and, above all, without hurrying, your liberty need cost you only a few scratches. The great difficulty is to supply the cords; and this is what has been occupying my whole mind during the last fortnight, in which this great idea has taken up all my time.

“I make no answer to that mad signal, the only stupid thing you have ever said in your life: ‘I do not wish to escape!’ The man who said: ‘Shoot the footman,’ exclaimed that boredom had driven you mad. I shall not attempt to hide from you that we fear a very imminent danger, which will perhaps hasten the day of your flight. To warn you of this danger, the lamp will signal several times in succession:

The castle has taken fire. You will reply:

Are my books burned?”

This letter contained five or six pages more of details; it was written in a microscopic hand on the thinnest paper.

“All that is very fine and very well thought out,” Fabrizio said to himself; “I owe an eternal debt of gratitude to the Conte and the Duchessa; they will think perhaps that I am afraid, but I shall not try to escape. Did anyone ever escape from a place where he was at the height of happiness, to go and cast

himself into a horrible exile where everything would be lacking, including air to breathe? What should I do after a month at Florence? I should put on a disguise to come and prowl round the gate of this fortress, and try to intercept a glance!"

Next day Fabrizio had an alarm; he was at his window, about eleven o'clock, admiring the magnificent view and awaiting the happy moment when he should see Clelia, when Grillo came breathless into his cell:

"Quick, quick, Monsignore! Fling yourself on your bed, pretend to be ill; there are three judges coming up! They are going to question you: think well before you speak; they have come to entangle you."

So saying, Grillo made haste to shut the little trap in the screen, thrust Fabrizio on to his bed and piled two or three cloaks on top of him.

"Tell them that you are very ill, and don't say much; above all make them repeat their questions, so as to have time to think."

The three judges entered. "Three escaped gaolbirds," thought Fabrizio on seeing their vile faces, "not three judges." They wore long black gowns. They bowed gravely and took possession, without saying a word, of the three chairs that were in the room.

"Signor Fabrizio del Dongo," said the eldest of the three, We are pained by the sad duty which we have come to you to perform. We are here to announce to you the decease of His Excellency the Signor Marchese del Dongo, your father, Second Grand Majordomo Major of the Lombardo–Venetian Kingdom, Knight Grand Cross of the Orders of — —" a string of titles followed. Fabrizio burst into tears. The judge went on:

"The Signora Marchesa del Bongo, your mother, informs you of this event by a letter missive; but as she has added to the fact certain improper reflexions, by a decree issued yesterday, the Court of Justice has decided that her letter shall be communicated to you only by extract, and it is this extract which the Recorder Bona is now going to read to you."

This reading finished, the judge came across to Fabrizio, who was still lying down, and made him follow on his mother's letter the passages of which

copies had been read to him. Fabrizio saw in the letter the words unjust imprisonment, cruel punishment for a crime which is no crime at all, and understood what had inspired the judges' visit. However, in his contempt for magistrates without honour, he did not actually say to them any more than:

"I am ill, gentlemen, I am dying of weakness, and you will excuse me if I do not rise."

When the judges had gone, Fabrizio wept again copiously, then said to himself: "Am I a hypocrite? I used to think that I did not love him at all."

On that day and the days that followed Clelia was very sad; she called him several times, but had barely the courage to say a few words. On the morning of the fifth day after their first meeting, she told him that she would come that evening to the marble chapel.

"I can only say a few words to you," she told him as she entered. She trembled so much that she had to lean on her maid. After sending the woman to wait at the chapel door: "You are going to give me your word of honour," she went on in a voice that was barely audible, "you are going to give me your word of honour that you will obey the Duchessa, and will attempt to escape on the day when she orders you and in the way that she will indicate to you, or else tomorrow morning I fly to a convent, and I swear to you here and now that never in my life will I utter a word to you again."

Fabrizio remained silent.

"Promise," said Clelia, the tears starting to her eyes and apparently quite beside herself, "or else we converse here for the last time. The life you have made me lead is intolerable: you are here on my account, and each day is perhaps the last of your existence." At this stage Clelia became so weak that she was obliged to seek the support of an enormous armchair that had originally stood in the middle of the chapel, for the use of the prisoner-prince; she was almost fainting.

"What must I promise?" asked Fabrizio with a beaten air.

"You know."

“I swear then to cast myself deliberately into a terrible disaster, and to condemn myself to live far from all that I love in the world.”

“Make a definite promise.”

“I swear to obey the Duchessa and to make my escape on the day she wishes and as she wishes. And what is to become of me once I am parted from you?”

“Swear to escape, whatever may happen to you.”

“What! Have you made up your mind to marry the Marchese Crescenzi as soon as I am no longer here?”

“Oh, heavens! What sort of heart do you think I have? . . . But swear, or I shall not have another moment’s peace.”

“Very well, I swear to escape from here on the day on which Signora Sanseverina shall order me to do so, and whatever may happen to me between now and then.”

This oath obtained, Clelia became so faint that she was obliged to retire after thanking Fabrizio.

“Everything was in readiness for my flight tomorrow morning,” she told him, “had you persisted in refusing. I should have beheld you at this moment for the last time in my life, I had vowed that to the Madonna. Now, as soon as I can leave my room, I shall go and examine the terrible wall beneath the new stone in the parapet.”

On the following day he found her so pale that he was keenly distressed. She said to him from the aviary window:

“Let us be under no illusion, my dear friend; as there is sin in our friendship, I have no doubt that misfortune will come to us. You will be discovered while seeking to make your escape, and ruined for ever, if it is no worse; however, we must satisfy the demands of human prudence, it orders us to leave nothing untried. You will need, to climb down the outside of the great tower, a strong cord more than two hundred feet long. In spite of all the

efforts I have made since I learned of the Duchessa's plan, I have only been able to procure cords that together amount to barely fifty feet. By a standing order of the governor, all cords that may be seen in the fortress are burned, and every evening they remove the well-ropes, which for that matter are so frail that they often break when drawing up the light weight attached to them. But pray God to forgive me, I am betraying my father, and working, unnatural girl that I am, to cause him undying grief. Pray to God for me, and, if your life is saved, make a vow to consecrate every moment of it to His Glory.

"This is an idea that has come to me: in a week from now I shall leave the citadel to be present at the wedding of one of the Marchese Crescenzi's sisters. I shall come back that night, as I must, but I shall try in every possible way not to come in until very late, and perhaps Barbone will not dare to examine me too closely. All the greatest ladies of the court will be at this wedding of the Marchese's sister, and no doubt Signora Sanseverina among them. In heaven's name, make one of these ladies give me a parcel of cords tightly packed, not too large, and reduced to the smallest possible bulk. Were I to expose myself to a thousand deaths I shall employ every means, even the most dangerous, to introduce this parcel of cords into the citadel, in defiance, alas, of all my duties. If my father comes to hear of it, I shall never see you again; but whatever may be the fate that is in store for me, I shall be happy within the bounds of a sisterly friendship if I can help to save you."

That same evening, by their nocturnal correspondence with the lamps, Fabrizio gave the Duchessa warning of the unique opportunity that would shortly arise of conveying into the citadel a sufficient length of cord. But he begged her to keep this secret even from the Conte, which seemed to her odd. "He is mad," thought the Duchessa, "prison has altered him, he is taking things in a tragic spirit." Next day a ball of lead, thrown by the slinger, brought the prisoner news of the greatest possible peril; the person who undertook to convey the cords, he was told, would be literally saving his life. Fabrizio hastened to give this news to Clelia. This leaden ball brought him also a very careful drawing of the western wall by which he was to climb down from the top of the great tower into the space enclosed within the bastions; from this point it was then quite easy to escape, the ramparts being, as we know, only twenty-three feet in height. On the back of the plan was written in an exquisite hand a magnificent sonnet: a generous soul

exhorted Fabrizio to take flight, and not to allow his soul to be debased and his body destroyed by the eleven years of captivity which he had still to undergo.

At this point a detail which is essential and will explain in part the courage that the Duchessa had found to recommend to Fabrizo so dangerous a flight, obliges us to interrupt for a moment the history of this bold enterprise.

Like all parties which are not in power, the Raversi party was not closely united. Cavaliere Riscara detested the Fiscal Rassi, whom he accused of having made him lose an important suit in which, as a matter of fact, he, Riscara, had been in the wrong. From Riscara the Prince received an anonymous message informing him that a copy of Fabrizio's sentence had been officially addressed to the governor of the citadel. The Marchesa Raversi, that skilled party leader, was extremely annoyed by this false move, and at once sent word of it to her friend the Fiscal General; she found it quite natural that he should have wished to secure something from the Minister Mosca while Mosca remained in power. Rassi presented himself boldly at the Palace, thinking that he would get out of the scrape with a few kicks; the Prince could not dispense with a talented jurist, and Rassi had procured the banishment as Liberals of a judge and a barrister, the only two men in the country who could have taken his place.

The Prince, beside himself with rage, hurled insults at him and advanced upon him to strike him.

"Why, it is only a clerk's mistake," replied Rassi with the utmost coolness; "the procedure is laid down by the law, it should have been done the day after Signor del Dongo was confined in the citadel. The clerk in his zeal thought it had been forgotten, and must have made me sign the covering letter as a formality."

"And you expect to take me in with a clumsy lie like that?" cried the Prince in a fury; "why not confess that you have sold yourself to that rascal Mosca, and that this is why he gave you the Cross. But, by heaven, you shall not escape with a thrashing: I shall have you brought to justice, I shall disgrace you publicly."

“I defy you to bring me to justice,” replied Rassi with assurance; he knew that this was a sure way of calming the Prince: “the law is on my side, and you have not a second Rassi to find you a way round it. You will not disgrace me, because there are moments when your nature is severe; you then feel a thirst for blood, but at the same time you seek to retain the esteem of reasonable Italians; that esteem is a sine qua non for your ambition. And so you will recall me for the first act of severity of which your nature makes you feel the need, and as usual I shall procure you a quite regular sentence passed by timid judges who are fairly honest men, which will satisfy your passions. Find another man in your States as useful as myself!”

So saying, Rassi fled; he had got out of his scrape with a sharp reprimand and half-a-dozen kicks. On leaving the Palace he started for his estate of Riva; he had some fear of a dagger-thrust in the first impulse of anger, but had no doubt that within a fortnight a courier would summon him back to the capital. He employed the time which he spent in the country in organising a safe method of correspondence with Conte Mosca; he was madly in love with the title of Barone, and felt that the Prince made too much of that sublime thing, nobility, ever to confer it upon him; whereas the Conte, extremely proud of his own birth, respected nothing but nobility proved by titles anterior by the year 1400.

The Fiscal General had not been out in his forecast: he had been barely eight days on his estate when a friend of the Prince, who came there by chance, advised him to return to Parma without delay; the Prince received him with a laugh, then assumed a highly serious air, and made him swear on the Gospel that he would keep secret what was going to be confided to him. Rassi swore with great solemnity, and the Prince, his eye inflamed by hatred, cried that he would no longer be master in his own house so long as Fabrizio del Dongo was alive.

“I cannot,” he went on, “either drive the Duchessa away or endure her presence; her eyes defy me and destroy my life.”

Having allowed the Prince to explain himself at great length, Rassi, affecting extreme embarrassment, finally exclaimed:

“Your Highness shall be obeyed, of course, but the matter is one of a horrible difficulty: there is no possibility of condemning a del Dongo to death for the murder of a Giletti; it is already a masterly stroke to have made twelve years’ imprisonment out of it. Besides, I suspect the Duchessa of having discovered three of the contadini who were employed on the excavations at Sanguigna, and were outside the trench at the moment when that brigand Giletti attacked del Dongo.”

“And where are these witnesses?” said the Prince, irritated.

“Hiding in Piedmont, I suppose. It would require a conspiracy against Your Highness’s life. . . .”

“There is a danger in that,” said the Prince, “it makes people think of the reality.”

“Well,” said Rassi with a feint of innocence, “that is all my official arsenal.”

“There remains poison. . . .”

“But who is to give it? Not that imbecile Conte?” “From what one hears, it would not be his first attempt. . . .”

“He would have to be roused to anger first,” Rassi went on; “and besides, when he made away with the captain he was not thirty, and he was in love, and infinitely less of a coward than he is in these days. No doubt, everything must give way to reasons of State; but, taken unawares like this and at first sight, I can see no one to carry out the Sovereign’s orders but a certain Barbone, registry clerk in the prison, whom Signor del Dongo knocked down with a cuff in the face on the day of his admission there.”

Once the Prince had been put at his ease, the conversation was endless; he brought it to a close by granting his Fiscal General a month in which to act; Rassi wished for two. Next day he received a secret present of a thousand sequins. For three days he reflected; on the fourth he returned to his original conclusion, which seemed to him self-evident: “Conte Mosca alone will have the heart to keep his word to me, because, in making me a Barone, he does not give me anything that he respects; secondly, by warning him, I save myself probably from a crime for which I am more or less paid in advance;

thirdly, I have my revenge for the first humiliating blows which Cavaliere Rassi has received." The following night he communicated to Conte Mosca the whole of his conversation with the Prince.

The Conte was secretly paying his court to the Duchessa; it is quite true that he still did not see her in her own house more than once or twice in a month, but almost every week, and whenever he managed to create an occasion for speaking of Fabrizio, the Duchessa, accompanied by Cecchina, would come, late in the evening, to spend a few moments in the Conte's gardens. She managed even to deceive her coachman, who was devoted to her, and believed her to be visiting a neighbouring house.

One may imagine whether the Conte, after receiving the Fiscal's terrible confidence, at once made the signal arranged between them to the Duchessa. Although it was the middle of the night, she begged him by Cecchina to come to her for a moment. The Conte, enraptured, lover-like, by this prospect of intimate converse, yet hesitated before telling the Duchessa everything. He was afraid of seeing her driven mad by grief.

After first seeking veiled words in which to mitigate the fatal announcement, he ended by telling her all; it was not in his power to keep a secret which she asked of him. In the last nine months her extreme misery had had a great influence on this ardent soul, this had fortified her courage, and she did not give way to sobs or lamentations. On the following evening she sent Fabrizio the signal of great danger:

"The castle has taken fire."

He made the appropriate reply:

"Are my books burned?"

The same night she was fortunate enough to have a letter conveyed to him in a leaden ball. It was a week after this that the marriage of the Marchese Crescenzi's sister was celebrated, when the Duchessa was guilty of an enormously rash action of which we shall give an account in its proper place.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Almost a year before the time of these calamities the Duchessa had made a singular acquaintance: one day when she had the luna, as they say in those parts, she had gone suddenly, towards evening, to her villa of Sacca, situated on the farther side of Colorno, on the hill commanding the Po. She was amusing herself in improving this property; she loved the vast forest which crowned the hill and reached to the house; she spent her time laying out paths in picturesque directions.

“You will have yourself carried off by brigands, fair Duchessa,” the Prince said to her one day; “it is impossible that a forest in which it is known that you take the air should remain deserted.” The Prince threw a glance at the Conte, whose jealousy he hoped to quicken.

“I have no fear, Serene Highness,” replied the Duchessa with an innocent air, “when I go walking in my woods; I reassure myself with this thought: I have done no harm to anyone, who is there that could hate me?” This speech was considered daring, it recalled the insults offered by the Liberals of the country, who were most insolent people.

On the day of the walk in question, the Prince’s words came back to the mind of the Duchessa as she observed a very ill-dressed man who was following her at a distance through the woods. At a sudden turn which she took in the course of her walk, this person came so near her that she felt alarmed. Her first impulse was to call her game-keeper whom she had left half a mile away, in the flower-garden close to the house. The stranger had time to overtake her and fling himself at her feet. He was young, extremely good looking, but horribly badly dressed; his clothes had rents in them a foot long, but his eyes burned with the fire of an ardent soul.

“I am under sentence of death, I am the physician, Ferrante Palla, I am dying of hunger, I and my five children.”

The Duchessa had noticed that he was terribly thin; but his eyes were so fine, and filled with so tender an exaltation that they took from him any suggestion of crime. “Pallagi,” she thought, “might well have given eyes like those,to the Saint John in the Desert he has just placed in the Cathedral.” The idea of Saint John was suggested to her by the incredible thinness of the vagabond. The Duchessa gave him three sequins which she had in her purse, with an apology for offering him so little, because she had just paid her gardener’s account. Ferrante thanked her effusively. “Alas!” he said to her, “once I lived in towns, I used to see beautiful women; now that in fulfilment of my duties as a citizen I have had myself sentenced to death, I live in the woods, and I was following you, not to demand alms of you nor to rob you, but like a savage fascinated by an angelic beauty. It is so long since I last saw a pair of lovely white hands.”

“Rise, then,” the Duchessa told him; for he had remained on his knees.

“Allow me to remain like this,” said Ferrante; “this posture proves to me that I am not for the present engaged in robbery, and that soothes me; for you must know that I steal to live, now that I am prevented from practising my profession. But at this moment I am only a simple mortal who is adoring sublime beauty.” The Duchessa gathered that he was slightly mad, but she was not at all afraid; she saw in the eyes of the man that he had a good and ardent soul, and besides she had no objection to extraordinary physiognomies.

“I am a physician, then, and I was making love to the wife of the apothecary Sarasine of Parma: he took us by surprise and drove us from the house, with three children whom he supposed, and rightly, to be mine and not his. I have had two since then. The mother and five children are living in the direst poverty in a sort of hut which I built with my own hands a league from here, in the wood. For I have to keep away from the police, and the poor woman refuses to be parted from me. I was sentenced to death, and quite justly; I was conspiring. I abominate the Prince, who is a tyrant. I did not fly the country, for want of money. My misfortunes have greatly increased, and I ought to have killed myself a thousand times over; I no longer love the unhappy woman who has borne me these five children and has ruined herself for me; I love another. But if I kill myself, the five children will literally starve to death.” The man spoke with an accent of sincerity.

“But how do you live?” inquired the Duchessa, moved to compassion.

“The children’s mother spins; the eldest girl is kept in a farm by some Liberals, where she tends the sheep; I am a highwayman on the road between Piacenza and Genoa.”

“How do you harmonise highway robbery with your Liberal principles?”

“I keep a note of the people I rob, and if ever I have anything I shall restore to them the sums I have taken. I consider that a Tribune of the People like myself is performing work which, in view of its danger, is well worth a hundred francs monthly; and so I am careful not to take more than twelve hundred francs in a year.

“No, I am wrong, I steal a small sum in addition, for in that way I am able to meet the cost of printing my works.”

“What works?”

“Is —— — ever to have a Chamber and a Budget?”

“What,” said the Duchessa in amazement, “it is you, Sir, who are one of the greatest poets of the age, the famous Ferrante Palla?”

“Famous perhaps, but most unfortunate; that is certain.”

“And a man of your talent, Sir, is obliged to steal in order to live?”

“That is perhaps the calling for which I have some talent. Hitherto all our authors who have made themselves famous have been men paid by the government or the religion that they sought to undermine. I, in the first place, risk my life; in the second place, think, Signora, of the reflexions that disturb my mind when I go out to rob! Am I in the right, I ask myself. Does the office of Tribune render services that are really worth a hundred francs a month? I have two shirts, the coat in which you see me, a few worthless weapons, and I am sure to end by the rope; I venture to think that I am disinterested. I should be happy but for this fatal love which allows me to find only misery now in the company of the mother of my children. Poverty weighs upon me because it is ugly: I like fine clothes, white hands. . . .”

He looked at the Duchessa's in such a fashion that fear seized hold of her.

"Good-bye, Sir," she said to him: "can I be of any service to you in Parma?"

"Think sometimes of this question: his task is to awaken men's hearts and to prevent them from falling asleep in that false and wholly material happiness which is given by monarchies. Is the service that he renders to his fellow-citzens worth a hundred francs a month? . . . My misfortune is that I am in love," he said in the gentlest of tones, "and for nearly two years my heart has been occupied by you alone, but until now I have seen you without alarming you." And he took to his heels with a prodigious swiftness which astonished the Duchessa and reassured her. "The police would have hard work to catch him," she thought; "he must be mad, after all."

"He is mad," her servants informed her; "we have all known for a long time that the poor man was in love with the Signora; when the Signora is here we see him wandering in the highest parts of the woods, and as soon as the Signora has gone he never fails to come and sit in the very places where she has rested; he is careful to pick up any flowers that may have dropped from her nosegay and keeps them for a long time fastened in his battered hat."

"And you have never spoken to me of these eccentricities," said the Duchessa, almost in a tone of reproach.

"We were afraid that the Signora might tell the Minister Mosca. Poor Ferrante is such a good fellow! He has never done harm to anyone, and because he loves our Napoleon they have sentenced him to death."

She said no word to the Minister of this meeting, and, as in four years it was the first secret that she had kept from him, a dozen times she was obliged to stop short in the middle of a sentence. She returned to Sacca with a store of gold. Ferrante shewed no sign of life. She came again a fortnight later: Ferrante, after following her for some time, bounding through the wood at a distance of a hundred yards, fell upon her with the swiftness of a hawk, and flung himself at her feet as on the former occasion.

"Where were you a fortnight ago?"

“In the mountains, beyond Novi, robbing the muleteers who were returning from Milan where they had been selling oil.”

“Take this purse.”

Ferrante opened the purse, took from it a sequin which he kissed and thrust into his bosom, then handed it back to her.

“You give me back this purse, and you are a robber!”

“Certainly; my rule is that I must. never possess more than a hundred francs; now, at this moment, the mother of my children has eight francs, and I have twenty-five; I am five francs to the bad, and if they were to hang me now I should feel remorse. I have taken this sequin because it comes from you and I love you.”

The intonation of this very simple speech was perfect. “He does really love,” the Duchessa said to herself.

That day he appeared quite distracted. He said that there were in Parma people who owed him six hundred francs, and that with that sum he could repair his hut in which now his poor children were catching cold.

“But I will make you a loan of those six hundred francs,” said the Duchessa, genuinely moved.

“But then I, a public man — will not the opposite party have a chance to slander me, and say that I am selling myself?”

The Duchessa, in compassion, offered him a hiding-place in Parma if he would swear that for the time being he would not exercise his magistrature in that city, and above all would not carry out any of those sentences of death which, he said, he had in petto.

“And if they hang me, as a result of my rashness,” said Ferrante gravely, “all those scoundrels, who are so obnoxious to the People, will live for long years to come, and by whose fault? What will my father say to me when he greets me up above?”

The Duchessa spoke to him at length of his young children, to whom the damp might give fatal illnesses; he ended by accepting the offer of the hiding place in Parma.

The Duca Sanseverina, during the solitary half-day which he had spent in Parma after his marriage, had shewn the Duchessa a highly singular hiding place which exists in the southern corner of the palazzo of that name. The wall in front, which dates from the middle ages, is eight feet thick; it has been hollowed out inside, so as to provide a secret chamber twenty feet in height but only two in width. It is close to where the visitor admires the reservoir mentioned in all the accounts of travels, a famous work of the twelfth century, constructed at the time of the siege of Parma by the Emperor Sigismund, and afterwards enclosed within the walls of the palazzo Sanseverina.

One enters the hiding place by turning an enormous stone on an iron axis which runs through the middle of the block.

The Duchessa was so profoundly touched by Ferrante's madness and by the hard lot of his children, for whom he obstinately refused every present of any value, that she allowed him to make use of this hiding place for a considerable time. She saw him again a month later, still in the woods of Sacca, and as on this occasion he was a little more calm, he recited to her one of his sonnets which seemed to her equal if not superior to any of the finest work written in Italy in the last two centuries. Ferrante obtained several interviews; but his love grew exalted, became importunate, and the Duchessa perceived that this passion was obeying the laws of all love-affairs in which one conceives the possibility of a ray of hope. She sent him back to the woods, forbade him to speak to her again: he obeyed immediately and with a perfect docility. Things had reached this point when Fabrizio was arrested. Three days later, at nightfall, a Capuchin presented himself at the door of the palazzo Sanseverina; he had, he said, an important secret to communicate to the lady of the house. She was so wretched that she had him admitted: it was Ferrante. "There is happening here a fresh iniquity of which the Tribune of the people ought to take cognisance," this man mad with love said to her. "On the other hand, acting as a private citizen," he added, "I can give the Signora Duchessa Sanseverina nothing but my life, and I lay it before her."

So sincere a devotion on the part of a robber and madman touched the Duchessa keenly. She talked for some time to this man who was considered the greatest poet in the North of Italy, and wept freely. “Here is a man who understands my heart,” she said to herself. The following day he reappeared, again at the Ave Maria, disguised as a servant and wearing livery.

“I have not left Parma: I have heard tell of an atrocity which my lips shall not repeat; but here I am. Think, Signora, of what you are refusing! The being you see before you is not a doll of the court, he is a man!” He was on his knees as he uttered these words with an air which made them tell. “Yesterday I said to myself,” he went on: “She has wept in my presence; therefore she is a little less unhappy.”

“But, Sir, think of the dangers that surround you, you will be arrested in this town!”

“The Tribune will say to you: Signora, what is life when duty calls? The unhappy man, who has the grief of no longer feeling any passion for virtue now that he is burning with love, will add: Signora Duchessa, Fabrizio, a man of feeling, is perhaps about to perish, do not repulse another man of feeling who offers himself to you! Here is a body of iron and a heart which fears nothing in the world but your displeasure.”

“If you speak to me again of your feelings, I close my door to you for ever.”

It occurred to the Duchessa, that evening, to announce to Ferrante that she would make a small allowance to his children, but she was afraid that he would go straight from the house and kill himself.

No sooner had he left her than, filled with gloomy presentiments, she said to herself: “I too, I may die, and would to God I might, and that soon! If I found a man worthy of the name to whom to commend my poor Fabrizio.”

An idea struck the Duchessa: she took a sheet of paper and drafted an acknowledgment, into which she introduced the few legal terms that she knew, that she had received from Signor Ferrante Palla the sum of 25,000 francs, on the express condition of paying every year a life-rent of 1,500 francs to Signora Sarasine and her five children. The Duchessa added: “In

addition, I bequeath a life-rent of 300 francs to each of these five children, on condition that Ferrante Palla gives his professional services as a physician to my nephew Fabrizio del Dongo, and behaves to him as a brother. This I request him to do." She signed the document, ante-dated it by a year and folded the sheet.

Two days later, Ferrante reappeared. It was at the moment when the town was agitated by the rumour of the immediate execution of Fabrizio. Would this grim ceremony take place in the citadel, or under the trees of the public mall? Many of the populace took a walk that evening past the gate of the citadel, trying to see whether the scaffold were being erected; this spectacle had moved Ferrante. He found the Duchessa in floods of tears and unable to speak; she greeted him with her hand and pointed to a seat. Ferrante, disguised that day as a Capuchin, was superb; instead of seating himself he knelt, and prayed devoutly in an undertone. At a moment when the Duchessa seemed slightly more calm, without stirring from his posture, he broke off his prayer for an instant to say these words: "Once again he offers his life."

"Think of what you are saying," cried the Duchessa, with that haggard eye which, following tears, indicates that anger is overcoming emotion.

"He offers his life to place an obstacle in the way of Fabrizio's fate, or to avenge it."

"There are circumstances," replied the Duchessa, "in which I could accept the sacrifice of your life."

She gazed at him with a severe attention. A ray of joy gleamed in his eye; he rose swiftly and stretched out his arms towards heaven. The Duchessa went to find a paper hidden in the secret drawer of a walnut cabinet

"Read this," she said to Ferrante. It was the deed in favour of his children, of which we have spoken.

Tears and sobs prevented Ferrante from reading it to the end; he fell on his knees.

"Give me back the paper," said the Duchessa, and, in his presence, burned it in the flame of a candle.

“My name,” she explained, “must not appear if you are taken and executed, for your life will be at stake.”

“My joy is to die in harming the tyrant: a far greater joy is to die for you. Once this is stated and clearly understood, be so kind as to make no further mention of this detail of money. I might see in it a suspicion that would be injurious to me.”

“If you are compromised, I may be also,” replied the Duchessa, “and Fabrizio as well as myself: it is for that reason, and not because 1 have any doubt of your bravery, that I require that the man who is lacerating my heart shall be poisoned and not stabbed. For the same reason which is so important to me, I order you to do everything in the world to save your own life.”

“I shall execute the task faithfully, punctiliously and prudently. I foresee, Signora Duchessa, that my revenge will be combined with your own: were it not so, I should still obey you faithfully, punctiliously and prudently. I may not succeed, but I shall employ all my human strength.”

“It is a question of poisoning Fabrizio’s murderer.”

“So I had guessed, and, during the twenty-seven months in which I have been leading this vagabond and abominable life, I have often thought of a similar action on my own account.”

“If I am discovered and condemned as an accomplice,” went on the Duchessa in a tone of pride, “I do not wish the charge to be imputed to me of having corrupted you. I order you to make no further attempt to see me until the time comes for our revenge: he must on no account be put to death before I have given you the signal. His death at the present moment, for instance, would be lamentable to me instead of being useful. Probably his death will occur only in several months’ time, but it shall occur. I insist on his dying by poison, and I should prefer to leave him alive rather than see him shot. For considerations which I do not wish to explain to you, I insist upon your life’s being saved.”

Ferrante was delighted with the tone of authority which the Duchessa adopted with him: his eyes gleamed with a profound joy. As we have said, he

was horribly thin; but one could see that he had been very handsome in his youth, and he imagined himself to be still what he had once been. “Am I mad?” he asked himself; “or will the Duchessa indeed one day, when I have given her this proof of my devotion, make me the happiest of men? And, when it comes to that, why not? Am I not worth as much as that doll of a Conte Mosca, who when the time came, could do nothing for her, not even enable Monsignor Fabrizio to escape?”

“I may wish his death tomorrow,” the Duchessa continued, still with the same air of authority. “You know that immense reservoir of water which is at the corner of the palazzo, not far from the hiding-place which you have sometimes occupied; there is a secret way of letting all that water run out into the street: very well, that will be the signal for my revenge. You will see, if you are in Parma, or you will hear it said, if you are living in the woods, that the great reservoir of the palazzo Sanseverina has burst. Act at once but by poison, and above all risk your own life as little as possible. No one must ever know that I have had a hand in this affair.”

“Words are useless,” replied Ferrante, with an enthusiasm which he could ill conceal: “I have already fixed on the means which I shall employ. The life of that man has become more odious to me than it was before, since I shall not dare to see you again so long as he is alive. I shall await the signal of the reservoir flooding the street.” He bowed abruptly and left the room. The Duchessa watched him go.

When he was in the next room, she recalled him.

“Ferrante!” she cried; “sublime man!”

He returned, as though impatient at being detained: his face at that moment was superb.

“And your children?”

“Signora, they will be richer than I; you will perhaps allow them some small pension.”

“Wait,” said the Duchessa as she handed him a sort of large case of olive wood, “here are all the diamonds that I have left: they are worth 50,000

francs."

"Ah! Signora, you humiliate me!" said Ferrante with a gesture of horror; and his face completely altered.

"I shall not see you again before the deed: take them, I wish it," added the Duchessa with an air of pride which struck Ferrante dumb; he put the case in his pocket and left her.

The door had closed behind him. The Duchessa called him back once again; he returned with an uneasy air: the Duchessa was standing in the middle of the room; she threw herself into his arms. A moment later, Ferrante had almost fainted with happiness; the Duchessa released herself from his embrace, and with her eyes shewed him the door.

"There goes the one man who has understood me," she said to herself; "that is how Fabrizio would have acted, if he could have realised."

There were two salient points in the Duchessa's character: she always wished what she had once wished; she never gave any further consideration to what had once been decided. She used to quote in this connexion a saying of her first husband, the charming General Pietranera. "What insolence to myself!" he used to say; "Why should I suppose that I have more sense today than when I made up my mind?"

>From that moment a sort of gaiety reappeared in the Duchessa's character. Before the fatal resolution, at each step that her mind took, at each new point that she saw, she had the feeling of her own inferiority to the Prince, of her weakness and gullibility; the Prince, according to her, had basely betrayed her, and Conte Mosca, as was natural to his courtier's spirit, albeit innocently, had supported the Prince. Once her revenge was settled, she felt her strength, every step that her mind took gave her happiness. I am inclined to think that the immoral happiness which the Italians find in revenge is due to the strength of their imagination; the people of other countries do not properly speaking forgive; they forget.

The Duchessa did not see Palla again until the last days of Fabrizio's imprisonment. As the reader may perhaps have guessed, it was he who gave

her the idea of his escape: there was in the woods, two leagues from Sacca, a mediaeval tower, half in ruins, and more than a hundred feet high; before speaking a second time to the Duchessa of an escape, Ferrante begged her to send Lodovico with a party of trustworthy men, to fasten a set of ladders against this tower. In the Duchessa's presence he climbed up by means of the ladders and down with an ordinary knotted cord; he repeated the experiment three times, then explained his idea again. A week later Lodovico too was prepared to climb down this old tower with a knotted cord; it was then that the Duchessa communicated the idea to Fabrizio.

In the final days before this attempt, which might lead to the death of the prisoner, and in more ways than one, the Duchessa could not secure a moment's rest unless she had Ferrante by her side; the courage of this man electrified her own; but it can be understood that she had to hide from the Conte this singular companionship. She was afraid, not that he would be revolted, but she would have been afflicted by his objections, which would have increased her uneasiness. "What! Take as an intimate adviser a madman known to be mad, and under sentence of death! And," added the Duchessa, speaking to herself, "a man who, in consequence, might do such strange things!" Ferrante happened to be in the Duchessa's drawing-room at the moment when the Conte came to give her a report of the Prince's conversation with Rassi; and, when the Conte had left her, she had great difficulty in preventing Ferrante from going straight away to the execution of a frightful plan.

"I am strong now," cried this madman; "I have no longer any doubt as to the lawfulness of the act!"

"But, in the moment of indignation which must inevitably follow, Fabrizio would be put to death!"

"Yes, but in that way we should spare him the danger of the climb: it is possible, indeed easy," he added; "but the young man lacks experience."

The marriage was celebrated of the Marchese Crescenzi's sister, and it was at the party given on this occasion that the Duchessa met Clelia, and was able to speak to her without causing any suspicion among the fashionable onlookers. The Duchessa herself handed to Clelia the parcel of cords in the

garden, where the two ladies had gone for a moment's fresh air. These cords, prepared with the greatest care, of hemp and silk in equal parts, were knotted, very slender and fairly flexible; Lodovico had tested their strength, and, in every portion, they could bear without breaking a load of sixteen hundredweight. They had been packed in such a way as to form several packets each of the size and shape of a quarto volume; Clelia took charge of them, and promised the Duchessa that everything that was humanly possible would be done to deliver these packets in the Torre Farnese.

"But I am afraid of the timidity of your nature; and besides," the Duchessa added politely, "what interest can you feel in a stranger?"

"Signor del Dongo is in distress, and I promise you that he shall be saved by me!"

But the Duchessa, placing only a very moderate reliance on the presence of mind of a young person of twenty, had taken other precautions, of which she took care not to inform the governor's daughter. As might be expected, this governor was present at the party given for the marriage of the Marchese Crescenzi's sister. The Duchessa said to herself that, if she could make him be given a strong narcotic, it might be supposed, at first, that he had had an attack of apoplexy, and then, instead of his being placed in his carriage to be taken back to the citadel, it might, with a little arrangement, be possible to have the suggestion adopted of using a litter, which would happen to be in the house where the party was being given. There, too, would be gathered a body of intelligent men, dressed as workmen employed for the party, who, in the general confusion, would obligingly offer their services to transport the sick man to his palazzo, which stood at such a height. These men, under the direction of Lodovico, carried a sufficient quantity of cords, cleverly concealed beneath their clothing. One sees that the Duchessa's mind had become really unbalanced since she had begun to think seriously of Fabrizio's escape. The peril of this beloved creature was too much for her heart, and besides was lasting too long. By her excess of precaution, she nearly succeeded in preventing his escape, as we shall presently see. Everything went off as she had planned, with this one difference, that the narcotic produced too powerful an effect; everyone believed, including the medical profession, that the General had had an apoplectic stroke.

Fortunately, Clelia, who was in despair, had not the least suspicion of so criminal an attempt on the part of the Duchessa. The confusion was such at the moment when the litter, in which the General, half dead, was lying, entered the citadel, that Lodovico and his men passed in without challenge; they were subjected to a formal scrutiny only at the Slave's Bridge. When they had carried the General to his bedroom, they were taken to the kitchens, where the servants entertained them royally; but after this meal, which did not end until it was very nearly morning, it was explained to them that the rule of the prison required that, for the rest of the night, they should be locked up in the lower rooms of the palazzo; in the morning at daybreak they would be released by the governor's deputy.

These men had found an opportunity of handing to Lodovico the cords with which they had been loaded, but Lodovico had great difficulty in attracting Clelia's attention for a moment. At length, as she was passing from one room to another, he made her observe that he was laying down packets of cords in a dark corner of one of the drawing-rooms of the first floor, Clelia was profoundly struck by this strange circumstance; at once she conceived atrocious suspicions.

"Who are you?" she asked Lodovico.

And, on receiving his highly ambiguous reply, she added:

"I ought to have you arrested; you or your masters have poisoned my father! Confess this instant what is the nature of the poison you have used, so that the doctor of the citadel can apply the proper remedies; confess this instant, or else, you and your accomplices shall never go out of this citadel!"

"The Signorina does wrong to be alarmed," replied Lodovico, with a grace and politeness that were perfect; "there is no question of poison; someone has been rash enough to administer to the General a dose of laudanum, and it appears that the servant who was responsible for this crime poured a few drops too many into the glass; this we shall eternally regret; but the Signorina may be assured that, thank heaven, there is no sort of danger; the Signore must be treated for having taken, by mistake, too strong a dose of laudanum; but, I have the honour to repeat to the Signorina, the lackey responsible for the crime made no use of real poisons, as Barbone did, when

he tried to poison Monsignor Fabrizio. There was no thought of revenge for the peril that Monsignor Fabrizio ran; nothing was given to this clumsy lackey but a bottle in which there was laudanum, that I swear to the Signorina! But it must be clearly understood that, if I were questioned officially, I should deny everything.

“Besides, if the Signorina speaks to anyone in the world of laudanum and poison, even to the excellent Don Cesare, Fabrizio is killed by the Signorina’s own hand. She makes impossible for ever all the plans of escape; and the Signorina knows better than I that it is not with laudanum that they wish to poison Monsignore; she knows, too, that a certain person has granted only a month’s delay for that crime, and that already more than a week has gone by since the fatal order was received. So, if she has me arrested, or if she merely says a word to Don Cesare or to anyone else, she retards all our activities far more than a month, and I am right in saying that she kills Monsignor Fabrizio with her own hand.”

Clelia was terrified by the strange tranquillity of Lodovico.

“And so,” she said to herself, “here I am conversing formally with my father’s poisoner, who employs polite turns of speech to address me! And it is love that has led me to all these crimes! . ..”

Her remorse scarcely allowed her the strength to speak; she said to Ludovico.

“I am going to lock you into this room. I shall run and tell the doctor that it is only laudanum; but, great God, how shall I tell him that I discovered this? I shall come back afterwards to release you. But,” said Clelia, running back from the door, “did Fabrizio know anything of the laudanum?”

“Heavens, no, Signorina, he would never have consented to that. And, besides, what good would it have done to make an unnecessary confidence? We are acting with the strictest prudence. It is a question of saving the life of Monsignore, who will be poisoned in three weeks from now; the order has been given by a person who is not accustomed to find any obstacle to his wishes; and, to tell the Signorina everything, they say that it was the terrible Fiscal General Rassi who received these instructions.”

Clelia fled in terror; she could so count on the perfect probity of Don Cesare that, taking certain precautions, she had the courage to tell him that the General had been given laudanum, and nothing else. Without answering, without putting any question, Don Cesare ran to the doctor.

Clelia returned to the room in which she had shut up Lodovico, with the intention of plying him with questions about the laudanum. She did not find him: he had managed to escape. She saw on the table a purse full of sequins and a box containing different kinds of poison. The sight of these poisons made her shudder. “How can I be sure,” she thought, “that they have given nothing but laudanum to my father, and that the Duchessa has not sought to avenge herself for Barbone’s attempt?

“Great God!” she cried, “here am I in league with my father’s poisoners. And I allow them to escape! And perhaps that man, when put to the question, would have confessed something else than laudanum!”

Clelia at once fell on her knees, burst into tears, and prayed to the Madonna with fervour.

Meanwhile the doctor of the citadel, greatly surprised by the information he had received from Don Cesare, according to which he had to deal only with laudanum, applied the appropriate remedies, which presently made the more alarming symptoms disappear. The General came to himself a little as day began to dawn. His first action that shewed any sign of consciousness was to hurl insults at the Colonel who was second in command of the citadel, and had taken upon himself to give certain orders, the simplest in the world, while the General was unconscious.

The governor next flew into a towering rage with a kitchen-maid who, when bringing him his soup, had been so rash as to utter the word apoplexy.

“Am I of an age,” he cried, “to have apoplexies? It is only my deadly enemies who can find pleasure in spreading such reports. And besides, have I been bled, that slander itself dare speak of apoplexy?”

Fabrizio, wholly occupied with the preparations for his escape, could not understand the strange sounds that filled the citadel at the moment when the

governor was brought in half dead. At first he had some idea that his sentence had been altered, and that they were coming to put him to death. Then, seeing that no one came to his cell, he thought that Clelia had been betrayed, that on her return to the fortress they had taken from her the cords which probably she was bringing back, and so, that his plans of escape were for the future impossible. Next day, at dawn, he saw come into his room a man unknown to him, who, without saying a word, laid down a basket of fruit: beneath the fruit was hidden the following letter:

“Penetrated by the keenest remorse for what has been done, not, thank heaven, by my consent, but as the outcome of an idea which I had, I have made a vow to the Blessed Virgin that if, by the effect of Her holy intercession my father is saved, I will never refuse to obey any of his orders; I will marry the Marchese as soon as he requires me to do so, and I will never see you again. However, I consider it my duty to finish what has been begun. Next Sunday, when you return from mass, to which you will be taken at my request (remember to prepare your soul, you may kill yourself in the difficult enterprise); when you return from mass, I say, put off as long as possible going back to your room; you will find there what is necessary for the enterprise that you have in mind. If you perish, my heart will be broken! Will you be able to accuse me of having contributed to your death? Has not the Duchessa herself repeated to me upon several occasions that the Raversi faction is winning? They seek to bind the Prince by an act of cruelty that must separate him for ever from Conte Mosca. The Duchessa, with floods of tears, has sworn to me that there remains only this resource: you will perish unless you make an attempt. I cannot look at you again, I have made my vow; but if on Sunday, towards evening, you see me dressed entirely in black, at the usual window, it will be the signal that everything will be ready that night so far as my feeble means allow. After eleven, perhaps at midnight or at one o’clock, a little lamp will appear in my window, that will be the decisive moment; commend yourself to your Holy Patron, dress yourself in haste in the priestly habit with which you are provided, and be off.

“Farewell, Fabrizio, I shall be at my prayers, and shedding the most bitter tears, as you may well believe, while you are running such great risks. If you perish, I shall not outlive you a day; Great God! What am I saying? But if you succeed, I shall never see you again. On Sunday, after mass, you will find in your prison the money, the poison, the cords, sent by that terrible

woman who loves you with passion, and who has three times over assured me that this course must be adopted. May God preserve you, and the Blessed Madonna!”

Fabio Conti was a gaoler who was always uneasy, always unhappy, always seeing in his dreams one of his prisoners escaping: he was loathed by everyone in the citadel; but misfortune inspiring the same resolutions in all men, the poor prisoners, even those who were chained in dungeons three feet high, three feet wide and eight feet long, in which they could neither stand nor sit, all the prisoners, even these, I say, had the idea of ordering a Te Deum to be sung at their own expense, when they knew that their governor was out of danger. Two or three of these wretches composed sonnets in honour of Fabio Conti. Oh, the effect of misery upon men! May he who would blame them be led by his destiny to spend a year in a cell three feet high, with eight ounces of bread a day and fasting on Fridays!

Clelia, who left her father’s room only to pray in the chapel, said that the governor had decided that the rejoicings should be confined to Sunday. On the morning of this Sunday, Fabrizio was present at mass and at the Te Deum; in the evening there were fireworks, and in the lower rooms of the palazzo the soldiers received a quantity of wine four times that which the governor had allowed; an unknown hand had even sent several barrels of brandy which the soldiers broached. The generous spirit of the soldiers who were becoming intoxicated would not allow the five of their number who were on duty as sentries outside the palazzo to suffer accordingly; as soon as they arrived at their sentry-boxes, a trusted servant gave them wine, and it was not known from what hand those who came on duty at midnight and for the rest of the night received also a glass each of brandy, while the bottle was in each case forgotten and left by the sentry-box (as was proved in the subsequent investigations).

The disorder lasted longer than Clelia had expected, and it was not until nearly one o’clock that Fabrizio, who, more than a week earlier, had sawn through two bars of his window, the window that did not look out on the aviary, began to take down the screen; he was working almost over the heads of the sentries who were guarding the governor’s palazzo, they heard nothing. He had made some fresh knots only in the immense cord necessary for descending from that terrible height of one hundred and eighty feet. He

arranged this cord as a bandolier about his body: it greatly embarrassed him, its bulk was enormous; the knots prevented it from being wound close, and it projected more than eighteen inches from his body. “This is the chief obstacle,” said Fabrizio.

This cord once arranged as well as possible, Fabrizio took the other with which he counted on climbing down the thirty-five feet which separated his window from the terrace on which the governor’s palazzo stood. But inasmuch as, however drunken the sentries might be, he could not descend exactly over their heads, he climbed out, as we have said, by the second window of his room, that which looked over the roof of a sort of vast guard-room. By a sick man’s whim, as soon as General Fabio Conti was able to speak, he had ordered up two hundred soldiers into this old guard-room, disused for over a century. He said that after poisoning him, they would seek to murder him in his bed, and these two hundred soldiers were to guard him. One may judge of the effect which this unforeseen measure had on the heart of Clelia: that pious girl was fully conscious to what an extent she was betraying her father, and a father who had just been almost poisoned in the interests of the prisoner whom she loved. She almost saw in the unexpected arrival of these two hundred men an act of Providence which forbade her to go any farther and to give Fabrizio his freedom.

But everyone in Parma was talking of the immediate death of the prisoner. This grim subject had been discussed again at the party given on the occasion of the marriage of Donna Giulia Crescenzi. Since for such a mere trifle as a clumsy sword-thrust given to an actor, a man of Fabrizio’s birth was not set at liberty at the end of nine months’ imprisonment, and when he had the protection of the Prime Minister, it must be because politics entered into the case. And in that event, it was useless to think any more about him, people said; if it was not convenient to authority to put him to death in a public place, he would soon die of sickness. A locksmith who had been summoned to General Fabio Conti’s palazzo spoke of Fabrizio as of a prisoner long since dispatched, whose death was being kept secret from motives of policy. This man’s words decided Clelia.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

During the day Fabrizio was attacked by certain serious and disagreeable reflexions; but as he heard the hours strike that brought him nearer to the moment of action, he began to feel alert and ready. The Duchessa had written that he would feel the shock of the fresh air, and that once he was out of his prison he might find it impossible to walk; in that case it was better to run the risk of being caught than to let himself fall from a height of a hundred and eighty feet. “If I have that misfortune,” said Fabrizio, “I shall lie down beneath the parapet, I shall sleep for an hour, then I shall start again. Since I have sworn to Clelia that I will make the attempt, I prefer to fall from the top of a rampart, however high, rather than always to have to think about the taste of the bread I eat. What horrible pains one must feel before the end, when one dies of poison! Fabio Conti will stand on no ceremony, he will make them give me the arsenic with which he kills the rats in his citadel.”

Towards midnight, one of those thick white fogs in which the Po sometimes swathes its banks, spread first of all over the town, and then reached the esplanade and the bastions from the midst of which rises the great tower of the citadel. Fabrizio estimated that from the parapet of the platform it would be impossible to make out the young acacias that surrounded the gardens laid out by the soldiers at the foot of the hundred and eighty foot wall. “That, now, is excellent,” he thought.

Shortly after half past twelve had struck, the signal of the little lamp appeared at the aviary window. Fabrizio was ready for action; he crossed himself, then fastened to his bed the fine cord intended to enable him to descend the thirty-five feet that separated him from the platform on which the palazzo stood. He arrived without meeting any obstacle on the roof of the guard-room occupied overnight by the reinforcement of two hundred soldiers of whom we have spoken. Unfortunately, the soldiers, at a quarter to one in the morning, as it now was, had not yet gone to sleep; while be was creeping on tiptoe over the roof of large curved tiles, Fabrizio could hear them saying that the devil was on the roof, and that they must try to kill him

with a shot from a musket. Certain voices insisted that this desire savoured of great impiety; others said that if a shot were fired without killing anything, the governor would put them all in prison for having alarmed the garrison without cause. The upshot of this discussion was that Fabrizio walked across the roof as quickly as possible and made a great deal more noise. The fact remains that at the moment when, hanging by his cord, he passed opposite the windows, mercifully at a distance of four or five feet owing to the projection of the roof, they were bristling with bayonets. Some accounts suggest that Fabrizio, mad as ever, had the idea of acting the part of the devil, and that he flung these soldiers a handful of sequins . . . One thing certain is that he had scattered sequins upon the floor of his room, and that he scattered more on the platform on his way from the Torre Farnese to the parapet, so as to give himself the chance of distracting the attention of the soldiers who might come in pursuit of him.

Landing upon the platform where he was surrounded by soldiers, who ordinarily called out every quarter of an hour a whole sentence: “All’s well around my post!” he directed his steps towards the western parapet and sought for the new stone.

The thing that appears incredible and might make one doubt the truth of the story if the result had not had a whole town for witnesses, is that the sentries posted along the parapet did not see and arrest Fabrizio; as a matter of fact the fog was beginning to rise, and Fabrizio said afterwards that when he was on the platform the fog seemed to him to have come already halfway up the Torre Farnese. But this fog was by no means thick, and he could quite well see the sentries, some of whom were moving. He added that, impelled as though by a supernatural force, he went to take up his position boldly between two sentries who were quite near one another. He calmly unwound the big cord which he had round his body, and which twice became entangled; it took him a long time to unravel it and spread it out on the parapet. He heard the soldiers talking on all sides of him, and was quite determined to stab the first who advanced upon him. “I was not in the least anxious,” he added, “I felt as though I were performing a ceremony.”

He fastened his cord, when it was finally unravelled, through an opening cut in the parapet for the escape of rain-water, climbed on to the said parapet and prayed to God with fervour; then, like a hero of the days of chivalry, he

thought for a moment of Clelia. “How different I am,” he said to himself, “from the fickle, libertine Fabrizio of nine months ago!” At length he began to descend that astounding height. He acted mechanically, he said, and as he would have done in broad daylight, climbing down a wall before friends, to win a wager. About halfway down, he suddenly felt his arms lose their strength; he thought afterwards that he had even let go the cord for an instant, but he soon caught hold of it again; possibly, he said, he had held on to the bushes into which he slipped, receiving some scratches from them. He felt from time to time an agonising pain between his shoulders; it actually took away his breath. There was an extremely unpleasant swaying motion; he was constantly flung from the cord to the bushes. He was brushed by several birds which he aroused, and which dashed at him in their flight. At first, he thought that he was being clutched by men who had come down from the citadel by the same way as himself in pursuit, and he prepared to defend his life. Finally he arrived at the base of the great tower without any inconvenience save that of having blood on his hands. He relates that, from the middle of the tower, the slope which it forms was of great use to him; he hugged the wall all the way down, and the plants growing between the stones gave him great support. On reaching the foot, among the soldiers’ gardens, he fell upon an acacia which, looked at from above, had seemed to him to be four or five feet high, but was really fifteen or twenty. A drunken man who was lying asleep beneath it took him for a robber. In his fall from this tree, Fabrizio nearly dislocated his right arm. He started to run towards the rampart; but, as he said, his legs felt like cotton, he had no longer any strength. In spite of the danger, he sat down and drank a little brandy which he had left. He dozed off for a few minutes to the extent of not knowing where he was; on awaking, he could not understand how, lying in bed in his cell, he saw trees. Then the terrible truth came back to his mind. At once he stepped out to the rampart, and climbed it by a big stair. The sentry who was posted close beside this stair was snoring in his box. He found a cannon lying in the grass; he fastened his third cord to it; it proved to be a little too short, and he fell into a muddy ditch in which there was perhaps a foot of water. As he was picking himself up and trying to take his bearings, he felt himself seized by two men; he was afraid for a moment; but presently heard a voice close to his ear whisper very softly: “Ah! Monsignore, Monsignore!” He gathered vaguely that these men belonged to the Duchessa; at once he fell in a dead faint. A minute later, he felt that he was being carried by men who were marching in silence and very fast; then they stopped, which

caused him great uneasiness. But he had not the strength either to speak or to open his eyes; he felt that he was being clasped in someone's arm; suddenly he recognised the scent of the Duchessa's clothing. This scent revived him; he opened his eyes; he was able to utter the words: "Ah! Dear friend!" Then once again he fainted away.

The faithful Bruno, with a squad of police all devoted to the Conte, was in reserve at a distance of two hundred yards; the Conte himself was hidden in a small house close to the place where the Duchessa was waiting. He would not have hesitated, had it been necessary, to take his sword in his hand, with a party of half-pay officers, his intimate friends; he regarded himself as obliged to save the life of Fabrizio, who seemed to him to be exposed to great risk, and would long ago have had his pardon signed by the Prince, if he, Mosca, had not been so foolish as to seek to avoid making the Sovereign write a foolish thing.

Since midnight the Duchessa, surrounded by men armed to the teeth, had been pacing in deep silence outside the ramparts of the citadel; she could not stay in one place, she thought that she would have to fight to rescue Fabrizio from the men who would pursue him. This ardent imagination had taken a hundred precautions, too long to be given here in detail, and of an incredible imprudence. It was calculated that more than eighty agents were afoot that night, in readiness to fight for something extraordinary. Fortunately Ferrante and Lodovico were at the head of all these men, and the Minister of Police was not hostile; but the Conte himself remarked that the Duchessa was not betrayed by anyone, and that he himself, as Minister, knew nothing.

The Duchessa lost her head altogether on seeing Fabrizio again; she clasped him convulsively in her arms, then was in despair on seeing herself covered in blood: it was the blood from Fabrizio's hands; she thought that he was dangerously wounded. With the assistance of one of her men, she was taking off his coat to bandage him when Lodovico, who fortunately happened to be on the spot, firmly put her and Fabrizio in one of the little carriages which were hidden in a garden near the gate of the town, and they set off at full gallop to cross the Po near Sacca. Ferrante, with a score of well-armed men, formed the rearguard, and had sworn on his head to stop the pursuit. The Conte, alone and on foot, did not leave the neighbourhood of the citadel until

two hours later, when he saw that no one was stirring. “Look at me, committing high treason,” he said to himself, mad with joy.

Lodovico had the excellent idea of placing in one of the carriages a young surgeon attached to the Duchessa’s household, who was of much the same build as Fabrizio.

“Make your escape,” he told him, “in the direction of Bologna; be as awkward as possible, try to have yourself arrested; then contradict yourself in your answers, and finally admit that you are Fabrizio del Dongo; above all, gain time. Use your skill in being awkward, you will get off with a month’s imprisonment, and the Signora will give you fifty sequins.”

“Does one think of money when one is serving the Signora?”

He set off, and was arrested a few hours later, an event which gave great joy to General Fabio Conti and also to Rassi, who, with Fabrizio’s peril, saw his Barony taking flight.

The escape was not known at the citadel until about six o’clock in the morning, and it was not until ten that they dared inform the Prince. The Duchessa had been so well served that, in spite of Fabrizio’s deep sleep, which she mistook for a dead faint, with the result that she stopped the carriage three times, she crossed the Po in a boat as four was striking. There were relays on the other side, they covered two leagues more at great speed, then were stopped for more than an hour for the examination of their passports. The Duchessa had every variety of these for herself and Fabrizio; but she was mad that day, and took it into her head to give ten napoleons to the clerk of the Austrian police, and to clasp his hand and burst into tears. This clerk, greatly alarmed, began the examination afresh. They took post; the Duchessa paid in so extravagant a fashion that everywhere she aroused suspicions, in that land where every stranger is suspect. Lodovico came to the rescue again: he said that the Signora Duchessa was beside herself with grief at the protracted fever of young Conte Mosca, son of the Prime Minister of Parma, whom she was taking with her to consult the doctors of Pavia.

It was not until they were ten leagues beyond the Po that the prisoner really awoke; he had a dislocated shoulder and a number of slight cuts. The Duchessa again behaved in so extraordinary a fashion that the landlord of a village inn where they dined thought he was entertaining a Princess of the Imperial House, and was going to pay her the honours which he supposed to be due to her when Lodovico told him that the Princess would without fail have him put in prison if he thought of ordering the bells to be rung.

At length, about six o'clock in the evening, they reached Piedmontese territory. There for the first time Fabrizio was in complete safety; he was taken to a little village off the high road, the cuts on his hands were dressed, and he slept for several hours more.

It was in this village that the Duchessa allowed herself to take a step that was not only horrible from the moral point of view, but also fatal to the tranquillity of the rest of her life. Some weeks before Fabrizio's escape, on a day when the whole of Parma had gone to the gate of the citadel, hoping to see in the courtyard the scaffold that was being erected for his benefit, the Duchessa had shown to Lodovico, who had become the factotum of her household, the secret by which one raised from a little iron frame, very cunningly concealed, one of the stones forming the floor of the famous reservoir of the palazzo Sanseverina, a work of the thirteenth century, of which we have spoken already. While Fabrizio was lying asleep in the trattoria of this little village, the Duchessa sent for Lodovico. He thought that she had gone mad, so strange was the look that she gave him.

"You probably expect," she said to him, "that I am going to give you several thousand francs; well, I am not; I know you, you are a poet, you would soon squander it all. I am giving you the small podere of La Ricciarda, a league from Casalmaggiore." Lodovico flung himself at her feet, mad with joy, and protesting in heartfelt accents that it was not with any thought of earning money that he had helped to save Monsignor Fabrizio; that he had always loved him with a special affection since he had had the honour to drive him once, in his capacity as the Signora's third coachman. When this man, who was genuinely warm-hearted, thought that he had taken up enough of the time of so great a lady, he took his leave; but she, with flashing eyes, said to him:

“Wait!”

She paced without uttering a word the floor of this inn room, looking from time to time at Lodovico with incredible eyes. Finally the man, seeing that this strange exercise showed no sign of coming to an end, took it upon himself to address his mistress.

“The Signora has made me so extravagant a gift, one so far beyond anything that a poor man like me could imagine, and moreover so much greater than the humble services which I have had the honour to render, that I feel, on my conscience, that I cannot accept the podere of La Ricciarda. I have the honour to return this land to the Signora, and to beg her to grant me a pension of four hundred francs.”

“How many times in your life,” she said to him with the most sombre pride, “how many times have you heard it said that I had abandoned a project once I had made it?”

After uttering this sentence, the Duchessa continued to walk up and down the room for some minutes; then suddenly stopping, cried:

“It is by accident, and because he managed to attract that little girl, that Fabrizio’s life has been saved! If he had not been attractive, he would now be dead. Can you deny that?” she asked, advancing on Lodovico with eyes in which the darkest fury blazed. Lodovico recoiled a few steps and thought her mad, which gave him great uneasiness as to the possession of his podere of La Ricciarda.

“Very well!” the Duchessa went on, in the most winning and light-hearted tone, completely changed, “I wish my good people of Sacca to have a mad holiday which they will long remember. You are going to return to Sacca; have you any objection? Do you think that you will be running any risk?”

“None to speak of, Signora: none of the people of Sacca will ever say that I was in Monsignor Fabrizio’s service. Besides, if I may venture to say so to the Signora, I am burning to see my property at La Ricciarda: it seems so odd for me to be a landowner!”

“Your gaiety pleases me. The farmer at La Ricciarda owes me, I think, three or four years’ rent; I make him a present of half of what he owes me, and the other half of all these arrears I give to you, but on this condition: you will go to Sacca, you will say there that the day after tomorrow is the festa of one of my patron saints, and, on the evening after your arrival, you will have my house illuminated in the most splendid fashion. Spare neither money nor trouble; remember that the occasion is the greatest happiness of my life. I have prepared for this illumination long beforehand; more than three months ago, I collected in the cellars of the house everything that can be used for this noble festa; I have put the gardener in charge of all the fireworks necessary for a magnificent display: you will let them off from the terrace overlooking the Po. I have eighty-nine large barrels of wine in my cellars, you will set up eighty-nine fountains of wine in my park. If next day there remains a single bottle which has not been drunk, I shall say that you do not love Fabrizio. When the fountains of wine, the illumination and the fireworks are well started, you will slip away cautiously, for it is possible, and it is my hope, that at Parma all these fine doings may appear an insolence.”

“It is not possible, it is only a certainty; as it is certain too that the Fiscal Rassi, who signed Monsignore’s sentence, will burst with rage. And indeed,” added Lodovico timidly, “if the Signora wished to give more pleasure to her poor servant than by bestowing on him half the arrears of La Ricciarda, she would allow me to play a little joke on that Rassi. .. .”

“You are a stout fellow!” cried the Duchessa in a transport; “but I forbid you absolutely to do anything to Rassi: I have a plan of having him publicly hanged, later on. As for you, try not to have yourself arrested at Sacca; everything would be spoiled if I lost you.”

“I, Signora! After I have said that I am celebrating the festa of one of the Signora’s patrons, if the police sent thirty constables to upset things, you may be sure that before they had reached the Croce Rossa in the middle of the village, not one of them would be on his horse. They’re no fools, the people of Sacca; finished smugglers all of them, and they worship the Signora.”

“Finally,” went on the Duchessa with a singularly detached air, “if I give wine to my good people of Sacca, I wish to flood the inhabitants of Parma; the same evening on which my house is illuminated, take the best horse in my stable, dash to my palazzo in Parma, and open the reservoir.”

“Ah! What an excellent idea of the Signora!” cried Lodovico, laughing like a madman; “wine for the good people of Sacca, water for the cits of Parma, who were so sure, the wretches, that Monsignor Fabrizio was going to be poisoned like poor L —— .”

Lodovico’s joy knew no end; the Duchessa complacently watched his wild laughter; he kept on repeating “Wine for the people of Sacca and water for the people of Parma! The Signora no doubt knows better than I that when they rashly emptied the reservoir, twenty years ago, there was as much as a foot of water in many of the streets of Parma.”

“And water for the people of Parma,” retorted the Duchessa with a laugh. “The avenue past the citadel would have been filled with people if they had cut off Fabrizio’s head. . . . They all call him the great culprit. . . . But, above all, do everything carefully, so that not a living soul knows that the flood was started by you or ordered by me. Fabrizio, the Conte himself must be left in ignorance of this mad prank. . . . But I was forgetting the poor of Sacca: go and write a letter to my agent, which I shall sign; you will tell him that, for the festa of my holy patron, he must distribute a hundred sequins among the poor of Sacca, and tell him to obey you in everything to do with the illumination, the fireworks and the wine; and especially that there must not be a full bottle in my cellars next day.”

“The Signora’s agent will have no difficulty except in one thing: in the five years that the Signora has had the villa, she has not left ten poor persons in Sacca.”

“And water for the people of Parma!” the Duchessa went on chanting. “How will you carry out this joke?”

“My plans are all made: I leave Sacca about nine o’clock, at half past ten my horse is at the inn of the Tre Ganasce, on the road to Casalmaggiore and to my podere of La Ricciarda; at eleven, I am in my room in the palazzo, and at

a quarter past eleven water for the people of Parma, and more than they wish, to drink to the health of the great culprit. Ten minutes later, I leave the town by the Bologna road. I make, as I pass it, a profound bow to the citadel, which Monsignore's courage and the Signora's spirit have succeeded in disgracing; I take a path across country, which I know well, and I make my entry into La Ricciarda."

Lodovico raised his eyes to the Duchessa and was startled. She was staring fixedly at the blank wall six paces away from her, and, it must be admitted, her expression was terrible.

"Ah! My poor podere!" thought Ludovico. "The fact of the matter is, she is mad!" The Duchessa looked at him and read bis thoughts.

"Ah! Signor Lodovico the great poet, you wish a deed of gift in writing: run and find me a sheet of paper." Lodovico did not wait to be told twice, and the Duchessa wrote out in her own hand a long form of receipt, ante-dated by a year, in which she declared that she had received from Lodovico San Micheli the sum of 80,000 francs, and had given him in pledge the lands of La Ricciarda. If after the lapse of twelve months the Duchessa had not restored the said 80,000 francs to Lodovico, the lands of La Ricciarda were to remain his property.

"It is a fine action," the Duchessa said to herself, "to give to a faithful servant nearly a third of what I have left for myself."

"Now then," she said to Lodovico, "after the joke of the reservoir, I give you just two days to enjoy yourself at Casalmaggiore. For the conveyance to hold good, say that it is a transaction which dates back more than a year. Come back and join me at Belgirate, and as quickly as possible; Fabrizio is perhaps going to England, where you will follow him."

Early the next day the Duchessa and Fabrizio were at Belgirate.

They took up then" abode in that enchanting village; but a killing grief awaited the Duchessa on Lake Maggiore. Fabrizio was entirely changed; from the first moments in which he had awoken from his sleep, still somewhat lethargic, after his escape, the Duchessa had noticed that

something out of the common was occurring in him. The deep-lying sentiment, which he took great pains to conceal, was distinctly odd, it was nothing less than this: he was in despair at being out of his prison. He was careful not to admit this cause of his sorrow, which would have led to questions which he did not wish to answer.

“What!” said the Duchessa, in amazement, “that horrible sensation when hunger forced you to feed, so as not to fall down, on one of those loathsome dishes supplied by the prison kitchen, that sensation: ‘Is there some strange taste in this, am I poisoning myself at this moment?’ — did not that sensation fill you with horror?”

“I thought of death,” replied Fabrizio, “as I suppose soldiers think of it: it was a possible thing which I thought to avoid by taking care.”

And so, what uneasiness, what grief for the Duchessa! This adored, singular, vivid, original creature was now before her eyes a prey to an endless train of fancies; he actually preferred solitude to the pleasure of talking of all manner of things, and with an open heart, to the best friend that he had in the world. Still he was always good, assiduous, grateful towards the Duchessa; he would, as before, have given his life a hundred times over for her; but his heart was elsewhere. They often went four or five leagues over that sublime lake without uttering a word. The conversation, the exchange of cold thoughts that from then onwards was possible between them might perhaps have seemed pleasant to others; but they remembered still, the Duchessa especially, what their conversation had been before that fatal fight with Giletti which had set them apart. Fabrizio owed the Duchessa an account of the nine months that he had spent in a horrible prison, and it appeared that he had nothing to say of this detention but brief and unfinished sentences.

“It was bound to happen sooner or later,” the Duchessa told herself with a gloomy sadness. “Grief has aged me, or else he is really in love, and I have now only the second place in his heart.” Demeaned, cast down by the greatest of all possible griefs, the Duchessa said to herself at times: “If, by the will of heaven, Ferrante should become mad altogether, or his courage should fail, I feel that I should be less unhappy.” From that moment this half-remorse poisoned the esteem that the Duchessa had for her own character.

“So,” she said to herself bitterly, “I am repenting of a resolution I have already made. Then I am no longer a del Dongo!”

“It is the will of heaven,” she would say: “Fabrizio is in love, and what right have I to wish that he should not be in love? Has one single word of genuine love ever passed between us?”

This idea, reasonable as it was, kept her from sleeping, and in short, a thing which shewed how old age and a weakening of the heart had come over her, she was a hundred times more unhappy than at Parma. As for the person who could be responsible for Fabrizio’s strange abstraction, it was hardly possible to entertain any reasonable doubt: Clelia Conti, that pious girl, had betrayed her father since she had consented to make the garrison drunk, and never once did Fabrizio speak of Clelia! “But,” added the Duchessa, beating her breast in desperation, “if the garrison had not been made drunk, all my stratagems, all my exertions became useless; so it is she that saved him!”

It was with extreme difficulty that the Duchessa obtained from Fabrizio any details of the events of that night, which, she said to herself, “would at one time have been the subject of an endlessly renewed discussion between us! In those happy times he would have talked for a whole day, with a force and gaiety endlessly renewed, of the smallest trifle which I thought of bringing forward.”

As it was necessary to think of everything, the Duchessa had installed Fabrizio at the port of Locarno, a Swiss town at the head of Lake Maggiore. Every day she went to fetch him in a boat for long excursions over the lake. Well, on one occasion when she took it into her head to go up to his room, she found the walls lined with a number of views of the town of Parma, for which he had sent to Milan or to Parma itself, a place which he ought to be holding in abomination. His little sitting-room, converted into a studio, was littered with all the apparatus of a painter in water-colours, and she found him finishing a third sketch of the Torre Farnese and the governor’s palazzo.

“The only thing for you to do now,” she said to him with an air of vexation, “is to make a portrait from memory of that charming governor whose only wish was to poison you. But, while I think of it,” she went on, “you ought to

write him a letter of apology for having taken the liberty of escaping and making his citadel look foolish."

The poor woman little knew how true her words were: no sooner had he arrived in a place of safety than Fabrizio's first thought had been to write General Fabio Conti a perfectly polite and in a sense highly ridiculous letter; he asked his pardon for having escaped, offering as an excuse that a certain subordinate in the prison had been ordered to give him poison. Little did he care what he wrote, Fabrizio hoped that Clelia's eyes would see this letter, and his cheeks were wet with tears as he wrote it. He ended it with a very pleasant sentence: he ventured to say that, finding himself at liberty, he frequently had occasion to regret his little room in the Torre Farnese. This was the principal thought in his letter, he hoped that Clelia would understand it. In his writing vein, and always in the hope of being read by someone, Fabrizio addressed his thanks to Don Cesare, that good chaplain who had lent him books on theology. A few days later Fabrizio arranged that the small bookseller of Locarno should make the journey to Milan, where this bookseller, a friend of the celebrated bibliomaniac Reina, bought the most sumptuous editions that he could find of the works that Don Cesare had lent Fabrizio. The good chaplain received these books and a handsome letter which informed him that, in moments of impatience, pardonable perhaps to a poor prisoner, the writer had covered the margins of his books with silly notes. He begged him, accordingly, to replace them in his library with the volumes which the most lively gratitude took the liberty of presenting to him.

Fabrizio was very modest in giving the simple name of notes to the endless scribblings with which he had covered the margins of a folio volume of the works of Saint Jerome. In the hope that he might be able to send back this book to the good chaplain, and exchange it for another, he had written day by day on the margins a very exact diary of all that occurred to him in prison; the great events were nothing else than ecstasies of divine love (this word divine took the place of another which he dared not write). At one moment this divine love led the prisoner to a profound despair, at other times a voice heard in the air restored some hope and caused transports of joy. All this, fortunately, was written with prison ink, made of wine, chocolate and soot, and Don Cesare had done no more than cast an eye over it as he put back on his shelves the volume of Saint Jerome. If he had studied the

margins, he would have seen that one day the prisoner, believing himself to have been poisoned, was congratulating himself on dying at a distance of less than forty yards from what he had loved best in the world. But another eye than the good chaplain's had read this page since his escape. That fine idea: To die near what one loves! expressed in a hundred different fashions, was followed by a sonnet in which one saw that this soul, parted, after atrocious torments, from the frail body in which it had dwelt for three-and-twenty years, urged by that instinct for happiness natural to everything that has once existed, would not mount to heaven to mingle with the choirs of angels as soon as it should be free, and should the dread Judgment grant it pardon for its sins; but that, more fortunate after death than it had been in life, it would go a little way from the prison, where for so long it had groaned, to unite itself with all that it had loved in this world. And "So," said the last line of the sonnet, "I should find my earthly paradise."

Although they spoke of Fabrizio in the citadel of Parma only as of an infamous traitor who had outraged the most sacred ties of duty, still the good priest Don Cesare was delighted by the sight of the fine books which an unknown hand had conveyed to him; for Fabrizio had decided to write to him only a few days after sending them, for fear lest his name might make the whole parcel be rejected with indignation. Don Cesare said no word of this kind attention to his brother, who flew into a rage at the mere name of Fabrizio; but since the latter's flight, he had returned to all his old intimacy with his charming niece; and as he had once taught her a few words of Latin, he let her see the fine books that he had received. Such had been the traveller's hope. Suddenly Clelia blushed deeply, she had recognised Fabrizio's handwriting. Long and very narrow strips of yellow paper were placed by way of markers in various parts of the volume. And as it is true to say that in the midst of the sordid pecuniary interests, and of the colourless coldness of the vulgar thoughts which fill our lives, the actions inspired by a true passion rarely fail to produce their effect; as though a propitious deity were taking the trouble to lead them by the hand, Clelia, guided by this instinct, and by the thought of one thing only in the world, asked her uncle to compare the old copy of Saint Jerome with the one that he had just received. How can I describe her rapture in the midst of the gloomy sadness in which Fabrizio's absence had plunged her, when she found on the margins of the old Saint Jerome the sonnet of which we have spoken, and the records, day by day, of the love that he had felt for her.

>From the first day she knew the sonnet by heart; she would sing it, leaning on her window-sill, before the window, “henceforward empty, where she had so often seen a little opening appear in the screen. This screen had been taken down to be placed in the office of the criminal court, and to serve as evidence in a ridiculous prosecution which Rassi was drawing up against Fabrizio, accused of the crime of having escaped, or, as the Fiscal said, laughing himself as he said it, of having removed himself from the clemency of a magnanimous Prince!

Each stage in Clelia’s actions was for her a matter for keen remorse, and now that she was unhappy, her remorse was all the keener. She sought to mitigate somewhat the reproaches that she addressed to herself by reminding herself of the vow never to see Fabrizio again, which she had made to the Madonna at the time when the General was nearly poisoned, and since then had renewed daily.

Her father had been made ill by Fabrizio’s escape, and, moreover, had been on the point of losing his post, when the Prince, in his anger, dismissed all the gaolers of the Torre Farnese, and sent them as prisoners to the town gaol. The General had been saved partly by the intercession of Conte Mosca, who preferred to see him shut up at the top of his citadel, rather than as an active and intriguing rival in court circles.

It was during the fortnight of uncertainty as to the disgrace of General Fabio Conti, who was really ill, that Clelia had the courage to carry out this sacrifice which she had announced to Fabrizio. She had had the sense to be ill on the day of the general rejoicings, which was also that of the prisoner’s flight, as the reader may perhaps remember; she was ill also on the following day, and, in a word, managed things so well that, with the exception of Grillo, whose special duty it was to look after Fabrizio, no one had any suspicion of her complicity, and Grillo held his tongue.

But as soon as Clelia had no longer any anxiety in that direction, she was even more cruelly tormented by her just remorse. “What argument in the world,” she asked herself, “can mitigate the crime of a daughter who betrays her father?”

One evening, after a day spent almost entirely in the chapel, and in tears, she begged her uncle, Don Cesare, to accompany her to the General, whose outbursts of rage alarmed her all the more since into every topic he introduced imprecations against Fabrizio, that abominable traitor.

Having come into her father's presence, she had the courage to say to him that if she had always refused to give her hand to the Marchese Crescenzi, it was because she did not feel any inclination towards him, and was certain of finding no happiness in such a union. At these words the General flew into a rage; and Clelia had some difficulty in making herself heard. She added that if her father, tempted by the Marchese's great fortune, felt himself bound to give her a definite order to marry him, she was prepared to obey. The General was quite astonished by this conclusion, which he had been far from expecting; he ended, however, by rejoicing at it. "So," he said to his brother, "I shall not be reduced to a lodging on a second floor, if that scoundrel Fabrizio makes me lose my post through his vile conduct."

Conte Mosca did not fail to shew himself profoundly scandalised by the flight of that scapegrace Fabrizio, and repeated when the occasion served the expression invented by Rassi to describe the base conduct of the young man — a very vulgar young man, to boot — who had removed himself from the clemency of the Prince. This witty expression, consecrated by good society, did not take hold at all of the people. Left to their own good sense, while fully believing in Fabrizio's guilt they admired the determination that he must have had to let himself down from so high a wall. Not a creature at court admired this courage. As for the police, greatly humiliated by this rebuff, they had officially discovered that a band of twenty soldiers, corrupted by the money distributed by the Duchessa, that woman of such atrocious ingratitude whose name was no longer uttered save with a sigh, had given Fabrizio four ladders tied together, each forty-five feet long; Fabrizio, having let down a cord which they had tied to these ladders, had had only the quite commonplace distinction of pulling the ladders up to where he was. Certain Liberals, well known for their imprudence, and among them Doctor C —— , an agent paid directly by the Prince, added, but compromised themselves by adding that these atrocious police had had the barbarity to shoot eight of the unfortunate soldiers who had facilitated the flight of that wretch Fabrizio. Thereupon he was blamed even by the true Liberals, as having caused by his imprudence by the death of eight poor

soldiers. It is thus that petty despotisms reduce to nothing the value of public opinion.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Amid this general uproar, Archbishop Landriani alone shewed himself loyal to the cause of his young friend; he made bold to repeat, even at the Princess's court, the legal maxim according to which, in every case, one ought to keep an ear free from all prejudice to hear the plea of an absent party.

The day after Fabrizio's escape a number of people had received a sonnet of no great merit which celebrated this flight as one of the fine actions of the age, and compared Fabrizio to an angel arriving on the earth with outspread wings. On the evening of the following day, the whole of Parma was repeating a sublime sonnet. It was Fabrizio's monologue as he let himself slide down the cord, and passed judgment on the different incidents of his life. This sonnet gave him a place in literature by two magnificent lines; all the experts recognised the style of Ferrante Palla.

But here I must seek the epic style: where can I find colours in which to paint the torrents of indignation that suddenly flooded every orthodox heart, when they learned of the frightful insolence of this illumination of the house at Sacca? There was but one outcry against the Duchessa; even the true Liberals decided that such an action compromised in a barbarous fashion the poor suspects detained in the various prisons, and needlessly exasperated the heart of the Sovereign. Conte Mosca declared that there was but one thing left for the Duchessa's former friends — to forget her. The concert of execration was therefore unanimous: a stranger passing through the town would have been struck by the energy of public opinion. But in the country, where they know how to appreciate the pleasure of revenge, the illumination and the admirable feast given in the park to more than six thousand contadini had an immense success. Everyone in Parma repeated that the Duchessa had distributed a thousand sequins among her contadini; thus they explained the somewhat harsh reception given to a party of thirty constables whom the police had been so foolish as to send to that small village, thirty-six hours after the sublime evening and the general intoxication that had followed it.

The constables, greeted with showers of stones, had turned and fled, and two of their number, who fell from their horses, were flung into the Po.

As for the bursting of the great reservoir of the palazzo Sanseverina, it had passed almost unnoticed: it was during the night that several streets had been more or less flooded, next morning one would have said that it had rained. Lodovico had taken care to break the panes of a window in the palazzo, so as to account for the entry of robbers.

They had even found a little ladder. Only Conte Mosca recognised his friend's inventive genius.

Fabrizio was fully determined to return to Parma as soon as he could; he sent Lodovico with a long letter to the Archbishop, and this faithful servant came back to post at the first village in Piedmont, San Nazzaro, to the west of Pavia, a Latin epistle which the worthy prelate addressed to his young client. We may add here a detail which, like many others no doubt, will seem otiose in countries where there is no longer any need of precaution. The name of Fabrizio del Dongo was never written; all the letters that were intended for him were addressed to Lodovico San Micheli, at Locarno in Switzerland, or at Belgirate in Piedmont. The envelope was made of a coarse paper, the seal carelessly applied, the address barely legible and sometimes adorned with recommendations worthy of a cook; all the letters were dated from Naples six days before their actual date.

>From the Piedmontese village of San Nazzaro, near Pavia, Lodovico returned in hot haste to Parma; he was charged with a mission to which Fabrizio attached the greatest importance; this was nothing less than to convey to Clelia Conti a handkerchief on which was printed a sonnet of Petrarch. It is true that a word was altered in this sonnet: Clelia found it on the table two days after she had received the thanks of the Marchese Crescenzi, who professed himself the happiest of men; and there is no need to say what impression this token of a still constant remembrance produced on her heart.

Lodovico was to try to procure all possible details as to what was happening at the citadel. He it was who told Fabrizio the sad news that the Marchese Crescenzi's marriage seemed now to be definitely settled; scarcely a day

passed without his giving a festa for Clelia, inside the citadel. A decisive proof of the marriage was that the Marchese, immensely rich and in consequence very avaricious, as is the custom among the opulent people of Northern Italy, was making immense preparations, and yet he was marrying a girl without a portion. It was true that General Fabio Conti, his vanity greatly shocked by this observation, the first to spring to the minds of all his compatriots, had just bought a properly worth more than 300,000 francs; and for this property he, who had nothing, had paid in ready money, evidently with the Marchese's gold. Moreover, the General had said that he was giving this property to his daughter on her marriage. But the charges for the documents and other matters, which amounted to more than 12,000 francs, seemed a most ridiculous waste of money to the Marchese, a man of eminently logical mind. For his part he was having woven at Lyons a set of magnificent tapestries of admirably blended colours, calculated to charm the eye, by the famous Pallagi, the Bolognese painter. These tapestries, each of which embodied some deed of arms by the Crescenzi family, which, as the whole world knows, is descended from the famous Crescentius, Roman Consul in the year 985, were to furnish the seventeen saloons which composed the ground floor of the Marchese's palazzo. The tapestries, clocks and lustres sent to Parma cost more than 350,000 francs; the price of the new mirrors, in addition to those which the house already possessed, came to 200,000 francs. With the exception of two rooms, famous works of the Parmigianino, the greatest of local painters after the divine Correggio, all those of the first and second floors were now occupied by the leading painters of Florence, Rome and Milan, who were decorating them with paintings in fresco. Fokelberg, the great Swedish sculptor, Tenerani of Rome and Marchesi of Milan had been at work for the last year on ten bas-reliefs representing as many brave deeds of Crescentius, that truly great man. The majority of the ceilings, painted in fresco, also offered some allusion to his life. The ceiling most generally admired was that on which Hayez of Milan had represented Crescentius being received in the Elysian Fields by Francesco Sforza, Lorenzo the Magnificent, King Robert, the Tribune Cola di Rienzi, Machiavelli, Dante and the other great men of the middle ages. Admiration for these chosen spirits is supposed to be an epigram at the expense of the men in power.

All these sumptuous details occupied the exclusive attention of the nobility and burgesses of Parma, and pierced our hero's heart when he read of them,

related with an artless admiration, in a long letter of more than twenty pages which Lodovico had dictated to a doganiere of Casalmaggiore.

“And I, who am so poor!” said Fabrizio, “an income of four thousand lire in all and for all! It is truly an impertinence in me to dare to be in love with Clelia Conti for whom all these miracles are being performed.”

A single paragraph in Lodovico’s long letter, but written, this, in his own villainous hand, announced to his master that he had met, at night and apparently in hiding, the unfortunate Grillo, his former gaoler, who had been put in prison and then released. The man had asked him for a sequin in charity, and Lodovico had given him four in the Duchessa’s name. The old gaolers recently set at liberty, twelve in number, were preparing an entertainment with their knives (un trattamento di cortellate) for the new gaolers their successors, should they ever succeed in meeting them outside the citadel. Grillo had said that almost every day there was a serenade at the fortress, that Signorina Clelia was extremely pale, often ill, and other things of the sort. This absurd expression caused Lodovico to receive, by courier after courier, the order to return to Locarno. He returned, and the details which he supplied by word of mouth were even more depressing for Fabrizio.

One may judge what consideration he was shewing for the poor Duchessa; he would have suffered a thousand deaths rather than utter in her hearing the name of Clelia Conti. The Duchessa abhorred Parma; whereas, for Fabrizio, everything which recalled that city was at once sublime and touching.

Less than ever had the Duchessa forgotten her revenge; she had been so happy before the incident of Giletti’s death — and now, what a fate was hers! She was living in expectation of a dire event of which she was careful not to say a word to Fabrizio, she who before, at the time of her arrangement with Ferrante, thought she would so delight Fabrizio by telling him that one day he would be avenged.

One can now form some idea of the pleasantness of Fabrizio’s conversations with the Duchessa: a gloomy silence reigned almost invariably between them. To enhance the pleasantness of their relations, the Duchessa had yielded to the temptation to play a trick on this too dear nephew. The Conte

wrote to her almost every day; evidently he was sending couriers as in the days of their infatuation, for his letters always bore the postmark of some little town in Switzerland. The poor man was torturing his mind so as not to speak too openly of his affection, and to construct amusing letters; barely did a distracted eye glance over them. What avails, alas, the fidelity of a respected lover when one's heart is pierced by the coldness of the other whom one sets above him?

In the space of two months the Duchessa answered him only once, and that was to engage him to explore how the land lay round the Princess, and to see whether, despite the impertinence of the fireworks, a letter from her, the Duchessa, would be received with pleasure. The letter which he was to present, if he thought fit, requested the post of Cavaliere d'onore to the Princess, which had recently fallen vacant, for the Marchese Crescenzi, and desired that it should be conferred upon him in consideration of his marriage. The Duchessa's letter was a masterpiece; it was a message of the most tender respect, expressed in the best possible terms; the writer had not admitted to this courtly style a single word the consequences, even the remotest consequences of which could be other than agreeable to the Princess. The reply also breathed a tender friendship, which was being tortured by the absence of its recipient.

"My son and I," the Princess told her, "have not spent one evening that could be called tolerable since your sudden departure. Does my dear Duchessa no longer remember that it was she who caused me to be consulted in the nomination of the officers of my household? Does she then think herself obliged to give me reasons for the Marchese's appointment, as if the expression of her desire was not for me the chief of reasons? The Marchese shall have the post, if I can do anything; and there will always be one in my heart, and that the first, for my dear Duchessa. My son employs absolutely the same expressions, a little strong perhaps on the lips of a great boy of one-and-twenty, and asks you for specimens of the minerals of the Val d'Orla, near Belgirate. You may address your letters, which will, I hope, be frequent, to the Conte, who still adores you and who is especially dear to me on account of these sentiments. The Archbishop also has remained faithful to you. We all hope to see you again one day: remember that it is your duty. The Marchesa Ghisleri, my Grand Mistress, is preparing to leave this world for a better: the poor woman has done me much harm; she displeases me still

further by departing so inopportunely; her illness makes me think of the name which I should once have set with so much pleasure in the place of hers, if, that is, I could have obtained that sacrifice of her independence from that matchless woman who, in fleeing from us, has taken with her all the joy of my little court," and so forth.

It was therefore with the consciousness of having sought to hasten, so far as it lay in her power, the marriage which was filling Fabrizio with despair, that the Duchessa saw him every day. And so they spent sometimes four or five hours in drifting together over the lake, without exchanging a single word. The good feeling was entire and perfect on Fabrizio's part; but he was thinking of other things, and his innocent and simple nature furnished him with nothing to say. The Duchessa saw this, and it was her punishment.

We have forgotten to mention in the proper place that the Duchessa had taken a house at Belgirate, a charming village and one that contains everything which its name promises (to wit a beautiful bend in the lake). From the window-sill of her drawing-room, the Duchessa could set foot in her boat. She had taken a quite simple one for which four rowers would have sufficed; she engaged twelve, and arranged things so as to have a man from each of the villages situated in the neighbourhood of Belgirate. The third or fourth time that she found herself in the middle of the lake with all of these well-chosen men, she stopped the movement of their oars.

"I regard you all as friends," she said to them, "and I wish to confide a secret in you. My nephew Fabrizio has escaped from prison; and possibly by treachery they will seek to recapture him, although he is on your lake, in a place of freedom. Keep your ears open, and inform me of all that you may hear. I authorise you to enter my room by day or night."

The rowers replied with enthusiasm; she knew how to make herself loved. But she did not think that there was any question of recapturing Fabrizio: it was for herself that all these precautions were taken, and, before the fatal order to open the reservoir of the palazzo Sanseverina, she would not have dreamed of them.

Her prudence had led her also to take an apartment at the port of Locarno for Fabrizio; every day he came to see her, or she herself crossed into

Switzerland. One may judge of the pleasantness of their perpetual companionship by the following detail. The Marchesa and her daughter came twice to see them, and the presence of these strangers gave them pleasure; for, in spite of the ties of blood, we may call “stranger” a person who knows nothing of our dearest interests and whom we see but once in a year.

The Duchessa happened to be one evening at Locarno, in Fabrizio’s rooms, with the Marchesa and her two daughters. The Archpriest of the place and the curate had come to pay their respects to these ladies: the Archpriest, who had an interest in a business house, and kept closely in touch with the news, was inspired to announce:

“The Prince of Parma is dead!”

The Duchessa turned extremely pale; she had barely the strength to say:

“Do they give any details?”

“No,” replied the Archpriest; “the report is confined to the announcement of his death, which is certain.”

The Duchessa looked at Fabrizio. “I have done this for him,” she said to herself; “I would have done things a thousand times worse, and there he is standing before me indifferent, and dreaming of another!” It was beyond the Duchessa’s strength to endure this frightful thought; she fell in a dead faint. Everyone hastened to her assistance; but, on coming to herself, she observed that Fabrizio was less active than the Archpriest and curate; he was dreaming as usual.

“He is thinking of returning to Parma,” the Duchessa told herself, “and perhaps of breaking off Clelia’s marriage to the Marchese; but I shall manage to prevent him.” Then, remembering the presence of the two priests, she made haste to add:

“He was a good Prince, and has been greatly maligned! It is an immense loss for us!”

The priests took their leave, and the Duchessa, to be alone, announced that she was going to bed.

“No doubt,” she said to herself, “prudence ordains that I should wait a month or two before returning to Parma; but I feel that I shall never have the patience; I am suffering too keenly here. Fabrizio’s continual dreaming, his silence, are an intolerable spectacle for my heart. Who would ever have said that I should find it tedious to float on this charming lake, alone with him, and at the moment when I have done, to avenge him, more than I can tell him! After such a spectacle, death is nothing. It is now that I am paying for the transports of happiness and childish joy which I found in my palazzo at Parma when I welcomed Fabrizio there on his return from Naples. If I had said a word, all was at an end, and it may be that, tied to me, he would not have given a thought to that little Clelia; but that word filled me with a horrible repugnance. Now she has prevailed over me. What more simple? She is twenty; and I, altered by my anxieties, sick, I am twice her age! . . . I must die, I must make an end of things! A woman of forty is no longer anything save to the men who have loved her in her youth! Now I shall find nothing more but the pleasures of vanity; and are they worth the trouble of living? All the more reason for going to Parma, and amusing myself. If things took a certain turn, I should lose my life. Well, where is the harm? I shall make a magnificent death, and, before the end, but then only, I shall say to Fabrizio: ‘Wretch! It is for you!’ Yes, I can find no occupation for what little life remains to me save at Parma. I shall play the great lady there. What a blessing if I could be sensible now of all those distinctions which used to make the Raversi so unhappy! Then, in order to see my happiness, I had to look into the eyes of envy. . . . My vanity has one satisfaction; with the exception of the Conte perhaps, no one can have guessed what the event was that put an end to the life of my heart. . . . I shall love Fabrizio, I shall be devoted to his interests; but he must not be allowed to break off Clelia’s marriage, and end by taking her himself. . . . No, that shall not be!”

The Duchessa had reached this point in her melancholy monologue, when she heard a great noise in the house.

“Good!” she said to herself, “they are coming to arrest me; Ferrante has let himself be caught, he must have spoken. Well, all the better! I am going to

have an occupation, I am going to fight them for my head. But in the first place, I must not let myself be taken."

The Duchessa, half clad, fled to the bottom of her garden: she was already thinking of climbing a low wall and escaping across country; but she saw someone enter her room. She recognised Bruno, the Conte's confidential man; he was alone with her maid. She went up to the window. The man Was telling her maid of the injuries he had received. The Duchessa entered the house. Bruno almost flung himself at her feet, imploring her not to tell the Conte of the preposterous hour at which he had arrived.

"Immediately after the Prince's death," he went on, "the Signor Conte gave the order to all the posts not to supply horses to subjects of the States of Parma. So that I had to go as far as the Po with the horses of the house, but on leaving the boat my carriage was overturned, broken, smashed, and I had such bad bruises that I could not get on a horse, as was my duty."

"Very well," said the Duchessa, "it is three o'clock in the morning: I shall say that you arrived at noon; but you must not go and give me away."

"I am very grateful for the Signora's kindness." Politics in a work of literature are like a pistol-shot in the middle of a concert, something loud and vulgar and yet a thing to which it is not possible to refuse one's attention.

We are about to speak of very ugly matters, as to which, for more than one reason, we should like to keep silence; but we are forced to do so in order to come to happenings which are in our province, since they have for their theatre the hearts of our characters.

"But, great God, how did that great Prince die?" said the Duchessa to Bruno.

"He was out shooting the birds of passage, in the marshes, along by the Po, two leagues from Sacca. He fell into a hole hidden by a tuft of grass; he was all in a sweat, and caught cold; they carried him to a lonely house where he died in a few hours. Some say that Signor Catena and Signor Borono are dead as well, and that the whole accident arose from the copper pans in the contadino's house they went to, which were full of verdigris. They took their luncheon there. In fact, the swelled heads, the Jacobins, who say what they

would like to be true, speak of poison. I know that my friend Toto, who is a groom at court, would have died but for the kind attention of a rustic who appeared to have a great knowledge of medicine, and gave him some very singular remedies. But they've ceased to talk of the Prince's death already; after all, he was a cruel man. When I left, the people were gathering to kill the Fiscal General Rassi: they were also proposing to set fire to the gates of the citadel, to enable the prisoners to escape. But it was said that Fabio Conti would fire his guns. Others were positive that the gunners at the citadel had poured water on their powder, and refused to massacre their fellow-citizens. But I can tell you something far more interesting: while the surgeon of Sandolaro was mending my poor arm, a man arrived from Parma who said that the mob had caught Barbone, the famous clerk from the citadel, in the street, and had beaten him, and were then going to hang him from the tree on the avenue nearest to the citadel. The mob were marching to break that fine statue of the Prince in the gardens of the court; but the Signor Conte took a battalion of the Guard, paraded them in front of the statue, and sent word to the people that no one who entered the gardens would go out of them alive, and the people took fright. But, what is a very curious thing, which the man who had come from Parma, who is an old constable, repeated several times, is that the Signor Conte kicked General P —— , the commander of the Prince's Guard, and had him led out of the garden by two fusiliers, after tearing off his epaulettes."

"I can see the Conte doing that," cried the Duchessa with a transport of joy which she would not have believed possible a minute earlier: "he will never allow anyone to insult our Princess; and as for General P —— , in his devotion to his rightful masters, he would never consent to serve the usurper, while the Conte, with less delicacy, fought through all the Spanish campaigns, and has often been reproached for it at court."

The Duchessa had opened the Conte's letter, but kept stopping as she read it to put a hundred questions to Bruno.

The letter was very pleasant; the Conte employed the most lugubrious terms, and yet the keenest joy broke out in every word; he avoided any detail of the Prince's death, and ended with the words:

“You will doubtless return, my dear angel, but I advise you to wait a day or two for the courier whom the Princess will send you, as I hope, today or tomorrow; your return must be as triumphant as your departure was bold. As for the great criminal who is with you, I count upon being able to have him tried by twelve judges selected from all parties in this State. But, to have the monster punished as he deserves, I must first be able to make spills of the other sentence, if it exists.”

The Conte had opened his letter to add:

“Now for a very different matter: I have just issued ammunition to the two battalions of the Guard; I am going to fight, and shall do my best to deserve the title of Cruel with which the Liberals have so long honoured me. That old mummy General P —— has dared to speak in the barracks of making a parley with the populace, who are more or less in revolt. I write to you from the street; I am going to the Palace, which they shall not enter save over my dead body. Good-bye! If I die, it will be worshipping you all the same, as I have lived. Do not forget to draw three hundred thousand francs which are deposited in my name with D —— of Lyons.

“Here is that poor devil Rassi, pale as death, and without his wig; you have no idea what he looks like. The people are absolutely determined to hang him; it would be doing him a great injustice, he deserves to be quartered. He took refuge in my palazzo and has run after me into the street; I hardly know what to do with him. . . . I do not wish to take him to the Prince’s Palace, that would make the revolt break out there. F —— shall see whether I love him; my first word to Rassi was: I must have the sentence passed on Signor del Dongo, and all the copies that you may have of it; and say to all those unjust judges, who are the cause of this revolt, that I will have them all hanged, and you as well, my dear friend, if they breathe a word of that sentence, which never existed. In Fabrizio’s name, I am sending a company of grenadiers to the Archbishop. Good-bye, dear angel. My palazzo is going to be burned, and I shall lose the charming portraits I have of you. I must run to the Palace to degrade that wretched General P —— , who is at his tricks; he is basely flattering the people, as he used to flatter the late Prince. All these Generals are in the devil of a fright; I am going, I think, to have myself made Commander in Chief.”

The Duchessa was unkind enough not to send to waken Fabrizio; she felt for the Conte a burst of admiration which was closely akin to love. “When all is said and done,” she decided, “I shall have to marry him.” She wrote to him at once and sent off one of her men. That night the Duchessa had no time to be unhappy.

Next day, about noon, she saw a boat manned by ten rowers which was swiftly cleaving the waters of the lake; Fabrizio and she soon recognised a man wearing the livery of the Prince of Parma: it was, in fact, one of his couriers who, before landing, cried to the Duchessa: “The revolt is suppressed!” This courier gave her several letters from the Conte, an admirable letter from the Princess, and an order from Prince Ranuccio–Ernesto V, on parchment, creating her Duchessa di San Giovanni and Grand Mistress to the Princess Dowager. The young Prince, an expert in mineralogy, whom she regarded as an imbecile, had had the intelligence to write her a little note; but there was love at the end of it. The note began thus:

“The Conte says, Signora Duchessa, that he is pleased with me; the fact is that I stood under fire by his side, and that my horse was hit: seeing the stir that is made about so small a matter, I am keen to take part in a real battle, but not against my subjects. I owe everything to the Conte; all my Generals, who have never been to war, ran like hares; I believe two or three have fled as far as Bologna. Since a great and deplorable event set me in power, I have signed no order which has given me so much pleasure as this which appoints you Grand Mistress to my mother. My mother and I both remembered a day when you admired the fine view one has from the palazzetto of San Giovanni, which once belonged to Petrarch, or so they say at least; my mother wished to give you that little property: and I, not knowing what to give you, and not venturing to offer you all that is rightly yours, have made you Duchessa in my country; I do not know whether you are learned enough in these matters to be aware that Sanseverina is a Roman title. I have just given the Grand Cordon of my Order to our worthy Archbishop, who has shown a firmness very rare in men of seventy. You will not be angry with me for having recalled all the ladies from exile. I am told that I must now sign only after writing the words your affectionate; it annoys me that I should be made to scatter broadcast what is completely true only when I write to you.

“Your affectionate

“RANUCCIO-ERNESTO”

Who would not have said, from such language, that the Duchessa was about to enjoy the highest favour? And yet she found something very strange in other letters from the Conte, which she received an hour or two later. He offered no special reason, but advised her to postpone for some days her return to Parma, and to write to the Princess that she was seriously unwell. The Duchessa and Fabrizio set off, nevertheless, for Parma immediately after dinner. The Duchessa’s object, which however she did not admit to herself, was to hasten the Marchese Crescenzi’s marriage; Fabrizio, for his part, spent the journey in wild transports of joy, which seemed to his aunt absurd. He was in hopes of seeing Clelia again soon; he fully counted upon carrying her off, against her will, if there should be no other way of preventing her marriage.

The Duchessa and her nephew made a very gay journey. At a post before Parma, Fabrizio stopped for a minute to change into the ecclesiastical habit; ordinarily he dressed as a layman in mourning. When he returned to the Duchessa’s room:

“I find something suspicious and inexplicable,” she said to him, “in the Conte’s letters. If you would take my advice you would spend a few hours here; I shall send you a courier after I have spoken to that great Minister.”

It was with great reluctance that Fabrizio consented to accept this sensible warning. Transports of joy worthy of a boy of fifteen were the note of the reception which the Conte gave to the Duchessa, whom he called his wife. It was long before he would speak of politics, and when at last they came down to cold reason:

“You did very well to prevent Fabrizio from arriving officially; we are in the full swing of reaction here. Just guess the colleague that the Prince has given me as Minister of Justice! Rassi, my dear, Rassi, whom I treated like the ruffian that he is, on the day of our great adventure. By the way, I must warn you that we have suppressed everything that has happened here. If you read our Gazette you will see that a clerk at the citadel, named Barbone, has died

as the result of falling from a carriage. As for the sixty odd rascals whom I dispatched with powder and shot, when they were attacking the Prince's statue in the gardens, they are in the best of health, only they are travelling abroad. Conte Zurla, the Minister of the Interior, has gone in person to the house of each of these unfortunate heroes, and has handed fifteen sequins to his family or his friends, with the order to say that the deceased is abroad, and a very definite threat of imprisonment should they let it be understood that he is dead. A man from my own Ministry, the Foreign Office, has been sent on a mission to the journalists of Milan and Turin, so that they shall not speak of the unfortunate event — that is the recognised expression; he is to go on to Paris and London, to insert a correction in all the newspapers, semi-officially, of anything that they may say about our troubles. Another agent has posted off to Bologna and Florence. I have shrugged my shoulders.

"But the delightful thing, at my age, is that I felt a moment of enthusiasm when I was speaking to the soldiers of the Guard, and when I tore the epaulettes off that contemptible General P —— . At that moment, I would have given my life, without hesitating, for the Prince: I admit now that it would have been a very stupid way of ending it. To-day the Prince, excellent young fellow as he is, would give a hundred scudi to see me die in my bed; he has not yet dared to ask for my resignation, but we speak to each other as seldom as possible, and I send him a number of little reports in writing, as I used to do with the late Prince, after Fabrizio's imprisonment. By the way, I have not yet made spills out of the sentence they passed on Fabrizio, for the simple reason that that scoundrel Rassi has not let me have it. So you are very wise to prevent Fabrizio from arriving here officially. The sentence still holds good; at the same time I do not think that Rassi would dare to have our nephew arrested now, but it is possible that he will in another fortnight. If Fabrizio absolutely insists on returning to town, let him come and stay with me."

"But the reason for all this?" cried the Duchessa in astonishment.

"They have persuaded the Prince that I am giving myself the airs of a dictator and a saviour of the country, and that I wish to lead him about like a boy; what is more, in speaking of him, I seem to have uttered the fatal words: that boy. It may be so, I was excited that day; for instance, I looked on him as a great man, because he was not unduly frightened by the first

shots he had ever heard fired in his life. He is not lacking in spirit, indeed he has a better tone than his father; in fact, I cannot repeat it too often, in his heart of hearts he is honest and good; but that sincere and youthful heart shudders when they tell him of any dastardly trick, and he thinks he must have a very dark soul himself to notice such things: think of the upbringing he has had!"

"Your Excellency ought to have remembered that one day he would be master, and to have placed an intelligent man with him."

"For one thing, we have the example of the Abbé de Condillac, who, when appointed by the Marchese di Felino, my predecessor, could make nothing more of his pupil than a King of fools. He succeeded in due course, and, in 1796, he had not the sense to treat with General Bonaparte, who would have tripled the area of his States. In the second place, I never expected to remain Minister for ten years in succession. Now that I have lost all interest in the business, as I have for the last month, I intend to amass a million before leaving this bedlam I have rescued to its own devices. But for me, Parma would have been a Republic for two months, with the poet Ferrante Palla as Dictator."

This made the Duchessa blush; the Conte knew nothing of what had happened.

"We are going to fall back into the ordinary Monarchy of the eighteenth century; the confessor and the mistress. At heart the Prince cares for nothing but mineralogy, and perhaps yourself, Signora. Since he began to reign, his valet, whose brother I have just made a captain, this brother having nine months' service, his valet, I say, has gone and stuffed into his head that he ought to be the happiest of men because his profile is going to appear on the scudi. This bright idea has been followed by boredom.

"What he now needs is an Aide-deCamp, as a remedy for boredom. Well, even if he were to offer me that famous million which is necessary for us to live comfortably in Naples or Paris, I would not be his remedy for boredom, and spend four or five hours every day with His Highness. Besides, as I have more brains than he, at the end of a month he would regard me as a monster.

“The late Prince was evil-minded and jealous, but he had been on service and had commanded army corps, which had given him a bearing; he had the stuff in him of which Princes are made, and I could be his Minister, for better or worse. With this honest fellow of a son, who is candid and really good, I am forced to be an intriguer. You see me now the rival of the humblest little woman in the Castle, and a very inferior rival, for I shall scorn all the hundred essential details. For instance, three days ago, one of those women who put out the clean towels every morning in the rooms, took it into her head to make the Prince lose the key of one of his English desks. Whereupon His Highness refused to deal with any of the business the papers of which happened to be in this desk; as a matter of fact, for twenty francs, they could have taken off the wooden bottom, or used skeleton keys; but Ranuccio–Ernesto V told me that that would be teaching the court locksmith bad habits.

“Up to the present, it has been absolutely impossible for him to adhere to any decision for three days running. If he had been born Marchese so-and-so, with an ample fortune, this young Prince would have been one of the most estimable men at court, a sort of Louis XVI; but how, with his pious simplicity, is he to resist all the cunningly laid snares that surround him? And so the drawing-room of your enemy the Marchesa Raversi is more powerful than ever; they have discovered there that I, who gave the order to fire on the people, and was determined to kill three thousand men if necessary, rather than let them outrage the statue of the Prince who had been my master, am a red-hot Liberal, that I wished him to sign a Constitution, and a hundred such absurdities. With all this talk of a Republic, the fools would prevent us from enjoying the best of Monarchies. In short, Signora, you are the only member of the present Liberal Party of which my enemies make me the head, at whose expense the Prince has not expressed himself in offensive terms; the Archbishop, always perfectly honest, for having spoken in reasonable language of what I did on the unhappy day, is in deep disgrace.

“On the morrow of the day which was not then called unhappy, when it was still true that the revolt had existed, the Prince told the Archbishop that, so that you should not have to take an inferior title on marrying me, he would make me a Duca. To-day I fancy that it is Rassi, ennobled by me when he sold me the late Prince’s secrets, who is going to be made Conte. In the face of such a promotion as that, I shall cut a sorry figure.”

“And the poor Prince will bespatter himself with mud.”

“No doubt; but after all he is master, a position which, in less than a fortnight, makes the ridiculous element disappear. So, dear Duchessa, as at the game of tric-trac, let us get out.”

“But we shall not be exactly rich.”

“After all, neither you nor I have any need of luxury. If you give me, at Naples, a seat in a box at San Carlo and a horse, I am more than satisfied; it will never be the amount of luxury with which we live that will give you and me our position, it is the pleasure which the intelligent people of the place may perhaps find in coming to take a dish of tea with you.”

“But,” the Duchessa went on, “what would have happened, on the unhappy day, if you had held aloof, as I hope you will in future?”

“The troops would have fraternised with the people, there would have been three days of bloodshed and incendiarism (for it would take a hundred years in this country for the Republic to be anything more than an absurdity), then a fortnight of pillage, until two or three regiments supplied from abroad came to put a stop to it. Ferrante Palla was in the thick of the crowd, full of courage and raging as usual; he had probably a dozen friends who were acting in collusion with him, which Rassi will make into a superb conspiracy. One thing certain is that, wearing an incredibly dilapidated coat, he was scattering gold with both hands.”

The Duchessa, bewildered by all this information, went in haste to thank the Princess.

As she entered the room the Lady of the Bedchamber handed her a little gold key, which is worn in the belt, and is the badge of supreme authority in the part of the Palace which belongs to the Princess. Clara–Paolina hastened to dismiss all the company; and, once she was alone with her friend, persisted for some moments in giving only fragmentary explanations. The Duchessa found it hard to understand what she meant, and answered only with considerable reserve. At length the Princess burst into tears, and, flinging

herself into the Duchessa's arms, cried: "The days of my misery are going to begin again; my son will treat me worse than his father did!"

"That is what I shall prevent," the Duchessa replied with emphasis. "But first of all," she went on, "I must ask Your Serene Highness to deign to accept this offering of all my gratitude and my profound respect."

"What do you mean?" cried the Princess, full of uneasiness, and fearing a resignation.

"I ask that whenever Your Serene Highness shall permit me to turn to the right the head of that nodding mandarin on her chimneypiece, she will permit me also to call things by their true names."

"Is that all, my dear Duchessa?" cried Clara–Paolina, rising from her seat and hastening herself to put the mandarin's head in the right position: "speak then, with the utmost freedom, Signora Maggiordoma," she said in a charming tone.

"Ma'am," the Duchessa went on, "Your Highness has grasped the situation perfectly; you and I are both running the greatest risk; the sentence passed on Fabrizio has not been quashed; consequently, on the day when they wish to rid themselves of me and to insult you, they will put him back in prison. Our position is as bad as ever. As for me personally, I am marrying the Conte, and we are going to set up house in Naples or Paris. The final stroke of ingratitude of which the Conte is at this moment the victim has entirely disgusted him with public life, and but for the interest Your Serene Highness takes in him, I should advise him to remain in this mess only on condition of the Prince's giving him an enormous sum. I shall ask leave of Your Highness to explain that the Conte, who had 130,000 francs when he came into office, has today an income of barely 20,000 lire. In vain did I long urge him to think of his pocket. In my absence, he has picked a quarrel with the Prince's Farmers–General, who were rascals; he has replaced them with other rascals, who have given him 800,000 francs."

"What!" cried the Princess in astonishment; "Heavens, I am extremely annoyed to hear that!"

“Ma’am,” replied the Duchessa with the greatest coolness, “must I turn the mandarin’s head back to the left?”

“Good heavens, no,” exclaimed the Princess; “but I am annoyed that a man of the Conte’s character should have thought of enriching himself in such a way.”

“But for this peculation he would be despised by all the honest folk.”

“Great heavens! Is it possible?”

“Ma’am,” went on the Duchessa, “except for my friend, the Marchese Crescenzi, who has an income of three or four hundred thousand lire, everyone here steals; and how should they not steal in a country where the recognition of the greatest services lasts for not quite a month? It means that there is nothing real, nothing that survives disgrace, save money. I am going to take the liberty, Ma’am, of saying some terrible truths.”

“You have my permission,” said the Princess with a deep sigh, “and yet they are painfully unpleasant to me.”

“Very well, Ma’am, the Prince your son, a perfectly honest man, is capable of making you far more unhappy than his father ever did; the late Prince was a man of character more or less like everyone else. Our present Sovereign is not sure of wishing the same thing for three days on end, and so, in order that one may make sure of him, one must live continually with him and not allow him to speak to anyone. As this truth is not very difficult to guess, the new Ultra Party, ruled by those two excellent heads, Rassi and the Marchesa Raversi, are going to try to provide the Prince with a mistress. This mistress will have permission to make her own fortune and to distribute various minor posts; but she will have to answer to the Party for the constancy of the master’s will.

“I, to be properly established at Your Highness’s court, require that Rassi be exiled and degraded; I desire, in addition, that Fabrizio be tried by the most honest judges that can be found: if these gentlemen admit, as I hope, that he is innocent, it will be natural to grant the petition of His Grace the Archbishop that Fabrizio shall be his Coadjutor with eventual succession. If

I fail, the Conte and I retire; in that case, I leave this parting advice with Your Serene Highness: she must never pardon Rassi, nor must she ever leave her son's States. While she is with him, that worthy son will never do her any serious harm."

"I have followed your arguments with the close attention they require," the Princess replied, smiling; "ought I, then, to take upon myself the responsibility of providing my son with a mistress?"

"Not at all, Ma'am, but see first of all that your drawing-room is the only one which he finds amusing."

The conversation on this topic was endless, the scales fell from the eyes of the innocent and intelligent Princess.

One of the Duchessa's couriers went to tell Fabrizio that he might enter the town, but must hide himself. He was barely noticed: he spent his time disguised as a contadino in the wooden booth of a chestnut-seller, erected opposite the gate of the citadel, beneath the trees of the avenue.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Duchessa arranged a series of charming evenings at the Palace, which had never seen such gaiety: never had she been more delightful than during this winter, and yet she was living in the midst of the greatest dangers; but at the same time, during this critical period, it so happened that she did not think twice with any appreciable regret of the strange alteration in Fabrizio. The young Prince used to appear very early at his mother's parties, where she always said to him:

"Away with you and govern; I wager there are at least a score of reports on your desk awaiting a definite answer, and I do not wish to have the rest of Europe accuse me of making you a mere figurehead in order to reign in your place."

These counsels had the disadvantage of being offered always at the most inopportune moments, that is to say when His Highness, having overcome his timidity, was taking part in some acted charade which amused him greatly. Twice a week there were parties in the country to which on the pretext of winning for the new Sovereign the affection of his people, the Princess admitted the prettiest women of the middle classes. The Duchessa, who was the life and soul of this joyous court, hoped that these handsome women, all of whom looked with a mortal envy on the great prosperity of the burgess Rassi, would inform the Prince of some of the countless rascalities of that Minister. For, among other childish ideas, the Prince claimed to have a moral Ministry.

Rassi had too much sense not to feel how dangerous these brilliant evenings at the Princess's court, with his enemy in command of them, were to himself. He had not chosen to return to Conte Mosca the perfectly legal sentence passed on Fabrizio; it was inevitable therefore that either the Duchessa or he must vanish from the court.

On the day of that popular movement, the existence of which it was now in good taste to deny, someone had distributed money among the populace.

Rassi started from that point: worse dressed even than was his habit, he climbed to the most wretched attics in the town, and spent whole hours in serious conversation with their needy inhabitants. He was well rewarded for all his trouble: after a fortnight of this kind of life he had acquired the certainty that Ferrante Palla had been the secret head of the insurrection, and furthermore, that this creature, a pauper all his life as a great poet would be, had sent nine or ten diamonds to be sold at Genoa.

Among others were mentioned five valuable stones which were really worth more than 40,000 francs, and which, ten days before the death of the Prince, had been sacrificed for 35,000 francs, because, the vendor said, he was in need of money.

What words can describe the rapture of the Minister of Justice on making this discovery? He had learned that every day he was being made a laughing stock at the court of the Princess Dowager, and on several occasions the Prince, when discussing business with him, laughed in his face with all the frankness of his youth. It must be admitted that Rassi had some singularly plebeian habits: for instance, as soon as a discussion began to interest him, he would cross his legs and take his foot in his hand; if the interest increased, he would spread his red cotton handkerchief over his knee, and so forth. The Prince had laughed heartily at the wit of one of the prettiest women of the middle class, who, being aware incidentally that she had a very shapely leg, had begun to imitate this elegant gesture of the Minister of Justice.

Rassi requested an extraordinary audience and said to the Prince:

“Would Your Highness be willing to give a hundred thousand francs to know definitely in what manner his august father met his death? With that sum, the authorities would be in a position to arrest the guilty parties, if such exist.”

The Prince’s reply left no room for doubt.

A little while later, Cecchina informed the Duchessa that she had been offered a large sum to allow her mistress’s diamonds to be examined by a jeweller; she had indignantly refused. The Duchessa scolded her for having refused; and, a week later, Cecchina had the diamonds to shew. On the day appointed for this exhibition of the diamonds, the Conte posted a couple of

trustworthy men at every jeweller's in Parma, and towards midnight he came to tell the Duchessa that the inquisitive jeweller was none other than Rassi's brother. The Duchessa, who was very gay that evening (they were playing at the Palace a commedia dell'arte, that is to say one in which each character invents the dialogue as he goes on, only the plot of the play being posted up in the green-room), the Duchessa, who was playing a part, had as her lover in the piece Conte Baldi, the former friend of the Marchesa Raversi, who was present. The Prince, the shyest man in his States, but an extremely good looking youth and one endowed with the tenderest of hearts, was studying Conte Baldi's part, which he intended to take at the second performance.

"I have very little time," the Duchessa told the Conte; "I am appearing in the first scene of the second act: let us go into the guard-room."

There, surrounded by a score of the body-guard, all wide awake and closely attentive to the conversation between the Prime Minister and the Grand Mistress, the Duchessa said with a laugh to her friend:

"You always scold me when I tell you unnecessary secrets. It was I who summoned Ernesto V to the throne; it was a question of avenging Fabrizio, whom I loved then far more than I do today, although always quite innocently. I know very well that you have little belief in my innocence, but that does not matter, since you love me in spite of my crimes. Very well, here is a real crime: I gave all my diamonds to a sort of lunatic, a most interesting man, named Ferrante Palla, I even kissed him so that he should destroy the man who wished to have Fabrizio poisoned. Where is the harm in that?"

"Ah! So that is where Ferrante had found money for his rising!" said the Conte, slightly taken aback; "and you tell me all this in the guard-room!"

"It is because I am in a hurry, and now Rassi is on the track of the crime. It is quite true that I never mentioned an insurrection, for I abhor Jacobins. Think it over, and let me have your advice after the play."

"I will tell you at once that you must make the Prince fall in love with you. But perfectly honourably, please."

The Duchessa was called to return to the stage. She fled.

Some days later the Duchessa received by post a long and ridiculous letter, signed with the name of a former maid of her own; the woman asked to be employed at the court, but the Duchessa had seen from the first glance that the letter was neither in her handwriting nor in her style. On opening the sheet to read the second page, she saw fall at her feet a little miraculous image of the Madonna, folded in a printed leaf from an old book. After glancing at the image, the Duchessa read a few lines of the printed page. Her eyes shone, she found on it these words:

"The Tribune has taken one hundred francs monthly, not more; with the rest it was decided to rekindle the sacred fire in souls which had become frozen by selfishness. The fox is upon my track, that is why I have not sought to see for the last time the adored being. I said to myself, she does not love the Republic, she who is superior to me in mind as well as by her graces and her beauty. Besides, how is one to create a Republic without Republicans? Can I be mistaken? In six months I shall visit, microscope in hand, and on foot, the small towns of America, I shall see whether I ought still to love the sole rival that you have in my heart. If you receive this letter, Signora Baronessa, and no profane eye has read it before yours, tell them to break one of the young ash trees planted twenty paces from the spot where I dared to speak to you for the first time. I shall then have buried, under the great box tree in the garden to which you called attention once in my happy days, a box in which will be found some of those things which lead to the slandering of people of my way of thinking. You may be sure that I should have taken care not to write if the fox were not on my track, and there were not a risk of his reaching that heavenly being; examine the box tree in a fortnight's time."

"Since he has a printing press at his command," the Duchessa said to herself, "we shall soon have a volume of sonnets; heaven knows what name he will give me!"

The Duchessa's coquetry led her to make a venture; for a week she was indisposed, and the court had no more pleasant evenings. The Princess, greatly shocked by all that her fear of her son was obliging her to do in the first moments of her widowhood, went to spend this week in a convent attached to the church in which the late Prince was buried.

This interruption of the evening parties threw upon the Prince an enormous burden of leisure and brought a noteworthy check to the credit of the Minister of Justice. Ernesto V realised all the boredom that threatened him if the Duchessa left his court, or merely ceased to diffuse joy in it. The evenings began again, and the Prince shewed himself more and more interested in the commedia dell'arte. He had the intention of taking a part, but dared not confess this ambition. One day, blushing deeply, he said to the Duchessa: "Why should not I act, also?"

"We are all at Your Highness's orders here; if he deigns to give me the order, I will arrange the plot of a comedy, all the chief scenes in Your Highness's part will be with me, and as, on the first evenings, everyone falters a little, if Your Highness will please to watch me closely, I will tell him the answers that he ought to make." Everything was arranged, and with infinite skill. The very shy Prince was ashamed of being shy, the pains that the Duchessa took not to let this innate shyness suffer made a deep impression on the young Sovereign.

On the day of his first appearance, the performance began half an hour earlier than usual, and there were in the drawing-room, when the party moved into the theatre, only nine or ten elderly women. This audience had but little effect on the Prince, and besides, having been brought up at Munich on sound monarchical principles, they always applauded. Using her authority as Grand Mistress, the Duchessa turned the key in the door by which the common herd of courtiers were admitted to the performance. The Prince, who had a literary mind and a fine figure, came very well out of his opening scenes; he repeated with intelligence the lines which he read in the Duchessa's eyes, or with which she prompted him in an undertone. At a moment when the few spectators were applauding with all their might, the Duchessa gave a signal, the door of honour was thrown open, and the theatre filled in a moment with all the pretty women of the court, who, finding that the Prince cut a charming figure and seemed thoroughly happy, began to applaud; the Prince flushed with joy. He was playing the part of a lover to the Duchessa. So far from having to suggest his speeches to him, she was soon obliged to request him to curtail those speeches; he spoke of love with an enthusiasm which often embarrassed the actress; his replies lasted five minutes. The Duchessa was no longer the dazzling beauty of the year before: Fabrizio's imprisonment, and, far more than that, her stay by Lake Maggiore

with a Fabrizio grown morose and silent, had added ten years to the fair Gina's age. Her features had become marked, they shewed more intelligence and less youth.

They had now only very rarely the playfulness of early youth; but on the stage, with the aid of rouge and all the expedients which art supplies to actresses, she was still the prettiest woman at court. The passionate addresses uttered by the Prince put the courtiers on the alert; they were all saying to themselves this evening: "There is the Balbi of this new reign." The Conte felt himself inwardly revolted. The play ended, the Duchessa said to the Prince before all the court:

"Your Highness acts too well; people will say that you are in love with a woman of eight-and-thirty, which will put a stop to my arrangement with the Conte. And so I will not act any more with Your Highness, unless the Prince swears to me to address me as he would a woman of a certain age, the Signora Marchesa Raversi, for example."

The same play was three times repeated; the Prince was madly happy; but one evening he appeared very thoughtful.

"Either I am greatly mistaken," said the Grand Mistress to the Princess, "or Rassi is seeking to play some trick upon us; I should advise Your Highness to choose a play for tomorrow; the Prince will act badly, and in his despair will tell you something."

The Prince did indeed act very badly; one could barely hear him, and he no longer knew how to end his sentences. At the end of the first act he almost had tears in his eyes; the Duchessa stayed beside him, but was cold and unmoved. The Prince, finding himself alone with her for a moment, in the actors' green-room, went to shut the door.

"I shall never," he said to her, "be able to play in the second and third acts; I absolutely decline to be applauded out of kindness; the applause they gave me this evening cut me to the heart. Give me your advice, what ought I to do?"

“I shall appear on the stage, make a profound reverence to Her Highness, another to the audience, like a real stage manager, and say that, the actor who was playing the part of Lelio having suddenly been taken ill, the performance will conclude with some pieces of music. Conte Rusca and little Ghisolfi will be delighted to be able to shew off their harsh voices to so brilliant an assembly.”

The Prince took the Duchessa’s hand, which he kissed with rapture.

“Why are you not a man?” he said to her; “you would give me good advice. Rassi has just laid on my desk one hundred and eighty-two depositions against the alleged assassins of my father. Apart from the depositions, there is a formal accusation of more than two hundred pages; I shall have to read all that, and, besides, I have given my word not to say anything to the Conte. All this is leading straight to executions, already he wants me to fetch back from France, from near Antibes, Ferrante Palla, that great poet whom I admire so much. He is there under the name of Poncet.”

“The day on which you have a Liberal hanged, Rassi will be bound to the Ministry by chains of iron, and that is what he wishes more than anything: but Your Highness will no longer be able to speak of leaving the Palace two hours in advance. I shall say nothing either to the Princess or to the Conte of the cry of grief which has just escaped you; but, since I am bound on oath to keep nothing secret from the Princess, I should be glad if Your Highness would say to his mother the same things that he has let fall with me.”

This idea provided a diversion to the misery of the hissed actor which was crushing the Sovereign.

“Very well, go and tell my mother; I shall be in her big cabinet.”

The Prince left the stage, found his way to the drawing-room from which one entered the theatre, harshly dismissed the Great Chamberlain and the Aide-deCamp on duty who were following him; the Princess, meanwhile, hurriedly left the play; entering the big cabinet, the Grand Mistress made a profound reverence to mother and son, and left them alone. One may imagine the agitation of the court, these are the things that make it so amusing. At the end of an hour the Prince himself appeared at the door of the

cabinet and summoned the Duchessa; the Princess was in tears; her son's expression had entirely altered.

"These are weak creatures who are out of temper," the Grand Mistress said to herself, "and are seeking some good excuse to be angry with somebody." At first the mother and son began both to speak at once to tell the details to the Duchessa, who in her answers took great care not to put forward any idea. For two mortal hours, the three actors in this tedious scene did not step out of the parts which we have indicated. The Prince went in person to fetch the two enormous portfolios which Rassi had deposited on his desk; on leaving his mother's cabinet, he found the whole court awaiting him. "Go away, leave me alone!" he cried in a most impolite tone which was quite without precedent in him. The Prince did not wish to be seen carrying the two portfolios himself, a Prince ought not to carry anything. The courtiers vanished in the twinkling of an eye. On his return the Prince encountered no one but the footmen who were blowing out the candles; he dismissed them with fury, also poor Fontana, the Aide-deCamp on duty, who had been so tactless as to remain, in his zeal.

"Everyone is doing his utmost to try my patience this evening," he said crossly to the Duchessa, as he entered the cabinet; he credited her with great intelligence, and was furious at her evident refusal to offer him any advice. She, for her part, was determined to say nothing so long as she was not asked for her advice quite expressly. Another long half hour elapsed before the Prince, who had a sense of his own dignity, could make up his mind to say to her: "But, Signora, you say nothing."

"I am here to serve the Princess, and to forget very quickly what is said before me."

"Very well, Signora," said the Prince, blushing deeply, "I order you to give me your opinion."

"One punishes crimes to prevent their recurrence. Was the late Prince poisoned? That is a very doubtful question. Was he poisoned by the Jacobins? That is what Rassi would dearly like to prove, for then he becomes for Your Highness a permanently necessary instrument. In that case Your Highness, whose reign is just beginning, can promise himself many evenings

like this. Your subjects say on the whole, what is quite true, that Your Highness has a strain of goodness in his nature; so long as he has not had any Liberal hanged, he will enjoy that reputation, and most certainly no one will ever dream of planning to poison him."

"Your conclusion is evident," cried the Princess angrily; "you do not wish us to punish my husband's assassins!"

"Apparently, Ma'am, because I am bound to them by ties of tender affection."

The Duchessa could see in the Prince's eyes that he believed her to be perfectly in accord with his mother as to dictating a plan of action to him. There followed between the two women a fairly rapid succession of bitter repartees, at the end of which the Duchessa protested that she would not utter a single word more, and adhered to her resolution; but the Prince, after a long discussion with his mother, ordered her once more to express her opinion.

"That is what I swear to Your Highnesses that I will not do!"

"But this is really childish!" exclaimed the Prince.

"I beg you to speak, Signora Duchessa," said the Princess with an air of dignity.

"That is what I implore you to excuse me from doing, Ma'am; but Your Highness," the Duchessa went on, addressing the Prince, "reads French perfectly: to calm our agitated minds, would he read us a fable by La Fontaine?"

The Princess thought this "us" extremely insolent, but assumed an air at once of surprise and of amusement when the Grand Mistress, who had gone with the utmost coolness to open the bookcase, returned with a volume of La Fontaine's Fables; she turned the pages for some moments, then said to the Prince, handing him the book:

"I beg your Highness to read the whole of the fable."

THE GARDENER AND THE LORD OF THE MANOR

A devotee of gardening there was,

Between the peasant and the yeoman class,

Who on the outskirts of a certain village

Owned a neat garden with a bit of tillage.

He made a quickset hedge to fence it in,

And there grew lettuce, pink and jessamine,

Such as win prizes at the local show,

Or make a birthday bouquet for Margot.

One day he called upon the neighbouring Squire

To ask his help with a marauding hare.

“The brute,” says he, “comes guzzling everywhere,

And simply laughs at all my traps and wire.

No stick or stone will hit him — I declare

He’s a magician.” “Rubbish! I don’t care

If he’s the Deuce himself,” replied the other,

“I warrant he shan’t give you much more bother.

Miraut, in spite of all his cunning,

Won’t take much time to get him running.”

“But when?” “To-morrow, sure as here I stand.”

Next morning he rides up with all his band.

“Now then, we’ll lunch!

Those chickens don’t look bad.”

* *

The luncheon over, all was preparation,

Bustle and buzz and animation,

Horns blowing, hounds barking, such a hullabaloo,

The good man feared the worst. His fear came true!

The kitchen-garden was a total wreck

Under the trampling, not a speck

Of pot or frame survived. Good-bye

To onion, leek, and chicory,

Good-bye to marrows and their bravery,

Good-bye to all that makes soup savoury!

* *

The wretched owner saw no sense

In this grand style of doing things;

But no one marked his mutterings.

The hounds and riders in a single trice

Had wrought more havoc in his paradise

Than all the hares in the vicinity

Could have achieved throughout infinity.

So far the story — now the moral:

Each petty Prince should settle his own quarrel.

If once he gets a King for an ally,

He's certain to regret it by and by.

[† For this translation of La Fontaine's fable I am indebted to my friend Mr. Edward Marsh, who allows me to reprint the lines from his Forty-two Fables of La Fontaine (William Heinemann, Ltd., 1924). C. K. S. M.]

This reading was followed by a long silence. The Prince paced up and down the cabinet, after going himself to put the volume back in its place.

"Well, Signora," said the Princess, "will you deign to speak?"

"No, indeed, Ma'am, until such time as His Highness shall appoint me his Minister; by speaking here, I should run the risk of losing my place as Grand Mistress."

A fresh silence, lasting a full quarter of an hour; finally the Princess remembered the part that had been played in the past by Marie de' Medici, the mother of Louis XIII: for the last few days the Grand Mistress had made the lettrice read aloud the excellent History of Louis XIII, by M. Bazin. The Princess, although greatly annoyed, thought that the Duchessa might easily leave the country, and then Rassi, who filled her with mortal terror, might

quite well imitate Richelieu and have her banished by her son. At this moment the Princess would have given everything in the world to humiliate her Grand Mistress; but she could not. She rose, and came, with a smile that was slightly exaggerated, to take the Duchessa's hand and say to her:

"Come, Signora, give me a proof of your friendship by speaking."

"Very well! Two words, and no more: burn, in the grate there, all the papers collected by that viper Rassi, and never reveal to him that they have been burned."

She added in a whisper, and in a familiar tone, in the Princess's ear:

"Rassi may become Richelieu!"

"But, damn it, those papers are costing me more than 80,000 francs!" the Prince exclaimed angrily.

"Prince," replied the Duchessa with emphasis, "that is what it costs to employ scoundrels of low birth. Would to God you could lose a million and never put your trust in the base rascals who kept your father from sleeping during the last six years of his reign."

The words low birth had greatly delighted the Princess, who felt that the Conte and his friend had too exclusive a regard for brains, always slightly akin to Jacobinism.

During the short interval of profound silence, filled by the Princess's reflections, the castle clock struck three. The Princess rose, made a profound reverence to her son, and said to him: "My health does not allow me to prolong the discussion further. Never have a Minister of low birth; you will not disabuse me of the idea that your Rassi has stolen half the money he has made you spend on spies." The Princess took two candles from the brackets and put them in the fireplace in such a way that they should not blow out; then, going up to her son, she added: "La Fontaine's fable prevails, in my mind, over the lawful desire to avenge a husband. Will Your Highness permit me to burn these writings?" The Prince remained motionless.

“His face is really stupid,” the Duchessa said to herself; “the Conte is right: the late Prince would not have kept us out of our beds until three o’clock in the morning, before making up his mind.”

The Princess, still standing, went on:

“That little attorney would be very proud, if he knew that his papers stuffed with lies, and arranged so as to secure his own advancement, had occupied the two greatest personages in the States for a whole night.”

The Prince dashed at one of the portfolios like a madman, and emptied its contents into the fireplace. The mass of papers nearly extinguished the two candles; the room filled with smoke. The Princess saw in her son’s eyes that he was tempted to seize a jug of water and save these papers, which were costing him eighty thousand francs.

“Open the window!” she cried angrily to the Duchessa. The Duchessa made haste to obey; at once all the papers took light together; there was a great roar in the chimney, and it soon became evident that it was on fire.

The Prince had a petty nature in all matters of money; he thought he saw his Palace in flames, and all the treasures that it contained destroyed; he ran to the window and called the guard in a voice completely altered. The soldiers in a tumult rushed into the courtyard at the sound of the Prince’s voice, he returned to the fireplace which was sucking in the air from the open window with a really alarming sound; he grew impatient, swore, took two or three turns up and down the room like a man out of his mind, and finally ran out.

The Princess and the Grand Mistress remained standing, face to face, and preserving a profound silence.

“Is the storm going to begin again?” the Duchessa asked herself; “upon my word, my cause is won.” And she was preparing to be highly impertinent in her replies, when a sudden thought came to her; she saw the second portfolio intact. “No, my cause is only half won!” She said to the Princess, in a distinctly cold tone:

“Does Ma’am order me to burn the rest of these papers?” “And where will you burn them?” asked the Princess angrily.

“In the drawing-room fire; if I throw them in one after another, there is no danger.”

The Duchessa put under her arm the portfolio bursting with papers, took a candle and went into the next room. She looked first to see that the portfolio was that which contained the depositions, put in her shawl five or six bundles of papers, burned the rest with great care, then disappeared without taking leave of the Princess.

“There is a fine piece of impertinence,” she said to herself,

with a laugh, “but her affectations of inconsolable widowhood

came very near to making me lose my head on a scaffold.”

On hearing the sound of the Duchessa’s carriage, the Princess was beside herself with rage at her Grand Mistress.

In spite of the lateness of the hour, the Duchessa sent for the Conte; he was at the fire at the Castle, but soon appeared with the news that it was all over. “That little Prince has really shewn great courage, and I have complimented him on it effusively.”

“Examine these depositions quickly, and let us burn them as soon as possible.”

The Conte read them, and turned pale.

“Upon my soul, they have come very near the truth; their procedure has been very cleverly managed, they are positively on the track of Ferrante Palla; and, if he speaks, we have a difficult part to play.”

“But he will not speak,” cried the Duchessa; “he is a man of honour: burn them, burn them.”

“Not yet. Allow me to take down the names of a dozen or fifteen dangerous witnesses, whom I shall take the liberty of removing, if Rassi ever thinks of beginning again.”

“I may remind Your Excellency that the Prince has given his word to say nothing to his Minister of Justice of our midnight escapade.”

“From cowardice and fear of a scene he will keep it.”

“Now, my friend, this is a night that has greatly hastened our marriage; I should not have wished to bring you as my portion a criminal trial, still less for a sin which I was led to commit by my interest in another man.”

The Conte was in love; he took her hand with an exclamation; tears stood in his eyes.

“Before you go, give me some advice as to the way I ought to behave with the Princess; I am utterly worn out, I have been play-acting for an hour on the stage and for five in her cabinet.”

“You have avenged yourself quite sufficiently for the Princess’s sour speeches, which were due only to weakness, by the impertinence with which you left her. Address her tomorrow in the tone you used this morning; Rassi is not yet in prison or in exile, and we have not yet torn up Fabrizio’s sentence.

“You were asking the Princess to come to a decision, which is a thing that always annoys Princes and even Prime Ministers; also you are her Grand Mistress, that is to say her little servant. By a reversion which is inevitable in weak people, in three days Rassi will be more in favour than ever; he will try to have someone hanged: so long as he has not compromised the Prince, he is sure of nothing.

“There has been a man injured in to-night’s fire; he is a tailor, who, upon my word, shewed an extraordinary intrepidity. To-morrow I am going to ask the Prince to take my arm and come with me to pay the tailor a visit; I shall be armed to the teeth and shall keep a sharp look-out; but anyhow, this young Prince is not hated at all as yet. I wish to make him accustomed to walking in the streets, it is a trick I am playing on Rassi, who is certainly going to succeed me, and will not be able to allow such imprudences. On our way back from the tailor’s, I shall take the Prince past his father’s statue; he will notice the marks of the stones which have broken the Roman toga in which

the idiot of a sculptor dressed it up; and, in short, he will have to be a great fool if he does not on his own initiative make the comment: ‘This is what one gains by having Jacobins hanged.’ To which I shall reply: ‘You must hang either ten thousand or none at all: the Saint–Bartholomew destroyed the Protestants in France.’

‘To-morrow, dear friend, before this excursion, send your name in to the Prince, and say to him: ‘Yesterday evening, I performed the duties of a Minister to you, and, by your orders, have incurred the Princess’s displeasure. You will have to pay me.’ He will expect a demand for money, and will knit his brows; you will leave him plunged in this unhappy thought for as long as you can; then you will say: ‘I beg Your Highness to order that Fabrizio be tried in contradittorio’ (which means, in his presence) ‘by the twelve most respected judges in your States.’ And, without losing any time, you will present for his signature a little order written out by your own fair hand, which I am going to dictate to you; I shall of course include the clause that the former sentence is quashed. To this there is only one objection; but, if you press the matter warmly, it will not occur to the Prince’s mind. He may say to you: ‘Fabrizio must first make himself a prisoner in the citadel.’ To which you will reply: ‘He will make himself a prisoner in the town prison” (you know that I am the master there; every evening your nephew will come to see us). If the Prince answers: ‘No, his escape has tarnished the honour of my citadel, and I desire, for form’s sake, that he return to the cell in which he was’; you in turn will reply: ‘No, for there he would be at the disposal of my enemy Rassi’; and, in one of those feminine sentences which you utter so effectively, you will give him to understand that, to make Rassi yield, you have only to tell him of to-night’s auto-da-fè; if he insists, you will announce that you are going to spend a fortnight at your place at Sacca.

“You will send for Fabrizio, and consult him as to this step which may land him in prison. If, to anticipate everything while he is under lock and key, Rassi should grow too impatient and have me poisoned, Fabrizio may run a certain risk. But that is hardly probable; you know that I have imported a French cook, who is the merriest of men, and makes puns; well, punning is incompatible with poison. I have already told our friend Fabrizio that I have managed to find all the witnesses of his fine and courageous action; it was evidently that fellow Giletti who tried to murder him. I have not spoken to you of these witnesses, because I wished to give you a surprise, but the plan

has failed; the Prince refused to sign. I have told our friend Fabrizio that certainly I should procure him a high ecclesiastical dignity; but I shall have great difficulty if his enemies can raise the objection in the Roman Curia of a charge of murder.

“Do you realise, Signora, that, if he is not tried and judged in the most solemn fashion, all his life long the name of Giletti will be a reproach to him? It would be a great act of cowardice not to have oneself tried, when one is sure of one’s innocence. Besides, even if he were guilty, I should make them acquit him. When I spoke to him, the fiery youngster would not allow me to finish, he picked up the official almanac, and we went through it together choosing the twelve most upright and learned judges; when we had made the list, we cancelled six names for which we substituted those of six counsel, my personal enemies, and, as we could find only two enemies, we filled up the gaps with four rascals who are devoted to Rassi.”

This proposal filled the Duchessa with a mortal anxiety, and not without cause; at length she yielded to reason, and, at the Minister’s dictation, wrote out the order appointing the judges.

The Conte did not leave her until six o’clock in the morning; she endeavoured to sleep, but in vain. At nine o’clock, she took breakfast with Fabrizio, whom she found burning with a desire to be tried; at ten, she waited on the Princess, who was not visible; at eleven, she saw the Prince, who was holding his levee, and signed the order without the slightest objection. The Duchessa sent the order to the Conte, and retired to bed.

It would be pleasant perhaps to relate Rassi’s fury when the Conte obliged him to countersign, in the Prince’s presence, the order signed that morning by the Prince himself; but we must go on with our story.

The Conte discussed the merits of each judge, and offered to change the names. But the reader is perhaps a little tired of all these details of procedure, no less than of all these court intrigues. From the whole business one can derive this moral, that the man who mingles with a court compromises his happiness, if he is happy, and, in any event, makes his future depend on the intrigues of a chambermaid.

On the other hand in America, in the Republic, one has to spend the whole weary day paying serious court to the shopkeepers in the street, and must become as stupid as they are; and there, one has no Opera.

The Duchessa, when she rose in the evening, had a moment of keen anxiety: Fabrizio was not to be found; finally, towards midnight, during the performance at court, she received a letter from him. Instead of making himself a prisoner in the town prison, where the Conte was in control, he had gone back to occupy his old cell in the citadel, only too happy to be living within a few feet of Clelia.

This was an event of vast consequence: in this place he was exposed to the risk of poison more than ever. This act of folly filled the Duchessa with despair; she forgave the cause of it, a mad love for Clelia, because unquestionably in a few days' time that young lady was going to marry the rich Marchese Crescenzi. This folly restored to Fabrizio all the influence he had originally enjoyed over the Duchessa's heart.

"It is that cursed paper which I went and made the Prince sign that will be his death! What fools men are with their ideas of honour! As if one needed to think of honour under absolute governments, in countries where a Rassi is Minister of Justice! He ought to have accepted the pardon outright, which the Prince would have signed just as readily as the order convening this extraordinary tribunal. What does it matter, after all, that a man of Fabrizio's birth should be more or less accused of having himself, sword in hand, killed an actor like Giletti?"

No sooner had she received Fabrizio's note than the Duchessa ran to the Conte, whom she found deadly pale.

"Great God! Dear friend, I am most unlucky in handling that boy, and you will be vexed with me again. I can prove to you that I made the gaoler of the town prison come here yesterday evening; every day your nephew would have come to take tea with you. What is so terrible is that it is impossible for you and me to say to the Prince that there is fear of poison, and of poison administered by Rassi; the suspicion would seem to him the height of immorality. However, if you insist, I am ready to go up to the Palace; but I am certain of the answer. I am going to say more; I offer you a stratagem

which I would not employ for myself. Since I have been in power in this country, I have not caused the death of a single man, and you know that I am so sensitive in that respect that sometimes, at the close of day, I still think of those two spies whom I had shot, rather too light-heartedly, in Spain. Very well, do you wish me to get rid of Rassi? The danger in which he is placing Fabrizio is unbounded; he has there a sure way of sending me packing."

This proposal pleased the Duchessa extremely, but she did not adopt it.

"I do not wish," she said to the Conte, "that in our retirement, beneath the beautiful sky of Naples, you should have dark thoughts in the evenings."

"But, dear friend, it seems to me that we have only the choice between one dark thought and another. What will you do, what will I do myself, if Fabrizio is carried off by an illness?"

The discussion returned to dwell upon this idea, and the Duchessa ended it with this speech:

"Rassi owes his life to the fact that I love you more than Fabrizio; no, I do not wish to poison all the evenings of the old age which we are going to spend together."

The Duchessa hastened to the fortress; General Fabio Conti was delighted at having to stop her with the strict letter of the military regulations: no one might enter a state prison without an order signed by the Prince.

"But the Marchese Crescenzi and his musicians come every day to the citadel?"

"Because I obtained an order for them from the Prince."

The poor Duchessa did not know the full tale of her troubles. General Fabio Conti had regarded himself as personally dishonoured by Fabrizio's escape: when he saw him arrive at the citadel, he ought not to have admitted him, for he had no order to that effect. "But," he said to himself, "it is Heaven that is sending him to me to restore my honour, and to save me from the ridicule which would assail my military career. This opportunity must not be missed:

doubtless they are going to acquit him, and I have only a few days for my revenge."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The arrival of our hero threw Clelia into despair: the poor girl, pious and sincere with herself, could not avoid the reflexion that there would never be any happiness for her apart from Fabrizio; but she had made a vow to the Madonna, at the time when her father was nearly poisoned, that she would offer him the sacrifice of marrying the Marchese Crescenzi. She had made the vow that she would never see Fabrizio, and already she was a prey to the most fearful remorse over the admission she had been led to make in the letter she had written Fabrizio on the eve of his escape. How is one to depict what occurred in that sorrowful heart when, occupied in a melancholy way with watching her birds flit to and fro, and raising her eyes from habit, and with affection, towards the window from which formerly Fabrizio used to look at her, she saw him there once again, greeting her with tender respect.

She imagined it to be a vision which Heaven had allowed for her punishment; then the atrocious reality became apparent to her reason. “They have caught him again,” she said to herself, “and he is lost!” She remembered the things that had been said in the fortress after the escape; the humblest of the gaolers regarded themselves as mortally insulted. Clelia looked at Fabrizio, and in spite of herself that look portrayed in full the passion that had thrown her into despair.

“Do you suppose,” she seemed to be saying to Fabrizio, “that I shall find happiness in that sumptuous palace which they are making ready for me? My father repeats to me till I am weary that you are as poor as ourselves; but, great God, with what joy would I share that poverty! But, alas, we must never see one another again!”

Clelia had not the strength to make use of the alphabets: as she looked at Fabrizio she felt faint and sank upon a chair that stood beside the window. Her head rested upon the ledge of this window, and as she had been anxious to see him until the last moment, her face was turned towards Fabrizio, who had a perfect view of it. When, after a few moments, she opened her eyes again, her first glance was at Fabrizio: she saw tears in his eyes, but those

tears were the effect of extreme happiness; he saw that absence had by no means made him forgotten. The two poor young things remained for some time as though spell-bound by the sight of each other. Fabrizio ventured to sing, as if he were accompanying himself on the guitar, a few improvised lines which said: “It is to see you again that I have returned to prison; they are going to try me.”

These words seemed to awaken all Clelia’s dormant virtue: she rose swiftly, and hid her eyes; and, by the most vivid gestures, sought to express to him that she must never see him again; she had promised this to the Madonna, and had looked at him just now in a moment of forgetfulness. Fabrizio venturing once more to express his love, Clelia fled from the room indignant, and swearing to herself that never would she see him again, for such were the precise words of her vow to the Madonna: “My eyes shall never see him again.” She had written them on a little slip of paper which her uncle Don Cesare had allowed her to burn upon the altar at the moment of the oblation, while he was saying mass.

But, oaths or no oaths, Fabrizio’s presence in the Torre Farnese had restored to Clelia all her old habits and activities. Normally she passed all her days in solitude, in her room. No sooner had she recovered from the unforeseen disturbance in which the sight of Fabrizio had plunged her, than she began to wander through the palazzo, and, so to speak, to renew her acquaintance with all her humble friends. A very loquacious old woman, employed in the kitchen, said to her with an air of mystery: “This time, Signor Fabrizio will not leave the citadel.”

“He will not make the mistake of going over the walls again,” said Clelia, “but he will leave by the door if he is acquitted.”

“I say, and I can assure Your Excellency that he will go out of the citadel feet first.”

Clelia turned extremely pale, a change which was remarked by the old woman and stopped the flow of her eloquence. She said to herself that she had been guilty of an imprudence in speaking thus before the governor’s daughter, whose duty it would be to tell everybody that Fabrizio had died a natural death. As she went up to her room, Clelia met the prison doctor, an

honest sort of man but timid, who told her with a terrified air that Fabrizio was seriously ill. Clelia could hardly keep on her feet; she sought everywhere for her uncle, the good Don Cesare, and at length found him in the chapel, where he was praying fervently: from his face he appeared upset. The dinner bell rang. At table, not a word was exchanged between the brothers; only, towards the end of the meal, the General addressed a few very harsh words to his brother. The latter looked at the servants, who left the room.

“General,” said Don Cesare to the governor, “I have the honour to inform you that I am leaving the citadel: I give you my resignation.”

“Bravo! Bravissimo! So that I shall be suspect! . . . And your reason, if you please?”

“My conscience.”

“Go on, you’re only a frock! You know nothing about honour.”

“Fabrizio is dead,” thought Clelia; “they have poisoned him at dinner, or it is arranged for tomorrow.” She ran to the aviary, resolved to sing, accompanying herself on the piano. “I shall go to confession,” she said to herself, “and I shall be forgiven for having broken my vow to save a man’s life.” What was her consternation when, on reaching the aviary, she saw that the screens had been replaced by planks fastened to the iron bars. In desperation she tried to give the prisoner a warning in a few words shouted rather than sung. There was no response of any sort: a deathly silence already reigned in the Torre Farnese. “It is all over,” she said to herself. Beside herself, she went downstairs, then returned to equip herself with the little money she had and some small diamond earrings; she took also, on her way out, the bread that remained from dinner, which had been placed in a sideboard. “If he still lives, my duty is to save him.” She advanced with a haughty air to the little door of the tower; this door stood open, and eight soldiers had just been posted in the pillared room on the ground floor. She faced these soldiers boldly; Clelia counted on speaking to the serjeant who would be in charge of them: this man was absent, Clelia rushed on to the little iron staircase which wound in a spiral round one of the pillars; the soldiers looked at her with great stupefaction but, evidently on account of

her lace shawl and her hat, dared not say anything to her. On the first landing there was no one; but, when she reached the second, at the entrance to the corridor which, as the reader may remember, was closed by three barred gates and led to Fabrizio's cell, she found a turnkey who was a stranger to her, and said to her with a terrified air: "He has not dined yet."

"I know that," said Clelia haughtily. The man dared not stop her. Twenty paces farther, Clelia found sitting upon the first of the six wooden steps which led to Fabrizio's cell, another turnkey, elderly and very cross, who said to her firmly:

"Signorina, have you an order from the governor?" "Do you mean to say that you do not know me?" Clelia, at that moment, was animated by a supernatural force, she was beside herself. "I am going to save my husband," she said to herself.

While the old turnkey was exclaiming: "But my duty does not allow me. . . . " Clelia hastened up the six steps; she hurled herself against the door: an enormous key was in the lock; she required all her strength to make it turn. At that moment, the old turnkey, who was half intoxicated, seized the hem of her gown, she went quickly into the room, shut the door behind her, tearing her gown, and, as the turnkey was pushing the door to follow her, closed it with a bolt which lay to her hand. She looked into the cell and saw Fabrizio seated at a small table upon which his dinner was laid. She dashed at the table, overturned it, and, seizing Fabrizio by the arm, said to him: "Hai mangiato?"

This use of the singular form delighted Fabrizio. In her confusion, Clelia forgot for the first time her feminine reserve, and let her love appear.

Fabrizio had been going to begin the fatal meal; he took her in his arms and covered her with kisses. "This dinner was poisoned," was his thought: "if I tell her that I have not touched it, religion regains its hold, and Clelia flies. If, on the other hand, she regards me as a dying man, I shall obtain from her a promise not to leave me. She wishes to find some way of breaking off her abominable marriage and here chance offers us one: the gaolers will collect, they will break down the door, and then, there will be such a scandal that

perhaps the Marchese Crescenzi will fight shy, and the marriage be broken off."

During the moment of silence occupied by these reflexions Fabrizio felt that already Clelia was seeking to free herself from his embrace.

"I feel no pain as yet," he said to her, "but presently it will prostrate me at your feet; help me to die."

"O my only friend!" was her answer, "I will die with thee." She clasped him in her arms with a convulsive movement.

She was so beautiful, half unclad and in this state of intense passion, that Fabrizio could not resist an almost unconscious impulse. No resistance was offered him.

In the enthusiasm of passion and generous instincts which follows an extreme happiness, he said to her fatuously:

"I must not allow an unworthy falsehood to soil the first moments of our happiness: but for your courage, I should now be only a corpse, or writhing in atrocious pain, but I was going to begin my dinner when you came in, and I have not touched these dishes at all."

Fabrizio dwelt upon these appalling images to conjure away the indignation which he could already read in Clelia's eyes. She looked at him for some moments, while two violent and conflicting sentiments fought within her, then flung herself into his arms. They heard a great noise in the corridor, the three iron doors were violently opened and shut, voices shouted.

"Ah! If I had arms!" cried Fabrizio; "they made me give them up before they would let me in. No doubt they are coming to kill me. Farewell, my Clelia, I bless my death since it has been the cause of my happiness." Clelia embraced him and gave him a little dagger with an ivory handle, the blade of which was scarcely longer than that of a pen-knife.

"Do not let yourself be killed," she said to him, "and defend yourself to the last moment; if my uncle the Priore hears the noise, he is a man of courage and virtue, he will save you." So saying she rushed to the door.

“If you are not killed,” she said with exaltation, holding the bolt of the door in her hand and turning her head towards him, “let yourself die of hunger rather than touch anything. Carry this bread always on you.” The noise came nearer, Fabrizio seized her round the body, stepped into her place by the door, and, opening it with fury, dashed down ‘ the six steps of the wooden staircase. He had in his hand the little dagger with the ivory handle, and was on the point of piercing with it the waistcoat of General Fontana, Aide-deCamp to the Prince, who recoiled with great alacrity, crying in a panic: “But I am coming to save you, Signor del Dongo.”

Fabrizio went up the six steps, called into the cell: “Fontana has come to save me”; then, returning to the General, on the wooden steps, discussed matters coldly with him. He begged him at great length to pardon him a movement of anger. “They wished to poison me; the dinner that is there on my table is poisoned; I had the sense not to touch it, but I may admit to you that this procedure has given me a shock. When I heard you on the stair, I thought that they were coming to finish me off with their dirks. Signor Generale, I request you to order that no one shall enter my cell: they would remove the poison, and our good Prince must know all.”

The General, very pale and completely taken aback, passed on the orders suggested by Fabrizio to the picked body of gaolers who were following him: these men, greatly dismayed at finding the poison discovered, hastened downstairs; they went first, ostensibly so as not to delay the Prince’s Aide-deCamp on the narrow staircase, actually in order to escape themselves and vanish. To the great surprise of General Fontana, Fabrizio kept him for fully a quarter of an hour on the little iron staircase which ran round the pillar of the ground floor; he wished to give Clelia time to hide on the floor above.

It was the Duchessa who, after various wild attempts, had managed to get General Fontana sent to the citadel; it was only by chance that she succeeded. On leaving Conte Mosca, as alarmed as she was herself, she had hastened to the Palace. The Princess, who had a marked repugnance for energy, which seemed to her vulgar, thought her mad and did not appear at all disposed to attempt any unusual measures on her behalf. The Duchessa, out of her senses, was weeping hot tears, she could do nothing but repeat, every moment:

“But, Ma’am, in a quarter of an hour Fabrizio will be dead, poisoned.”

Seeing the Princess remain perfectly composed, the Duchessa became mad with grief. She completely overlooked the moral reflexion which would not have escaped a woman brought up in one of those Northern religions which allow self-examination: “I was the first to use poison, and I am perishing by poison.” In Italy reflexions of that sort, in moments of passion, appear in the poorest of taste, as a pun would seem in Paris in similar circumstances.

The Duchessa, in desperation, risked going into the drawing-room where she found the Marchese Crescenzi, who was in waiting that day. On her return to Parma he had thanked her effusively for the place of Cavaliere d’onore, to which, but for her, he would never have had any claim. Protestations of unbounded devotion had not been lacking on his part. The Duchessa appealed to him in these words:

“Rassi is going to have Fabrizio, who is in the citadel, poisoned. Take in your pocket some chocolate and a bottle of water which I shall give you. Go up to the citadel, and save my life by saying to General Fabio Conti that you will break off your marriage with his daughter if he does not allow you to give the water and the chocolate to Fabrizio with your own hands.”

The Marchese turned pale, and his features, so far from shewing any animation at these words, presented a picture of the dullest embarrassment; he could not believe in the possibility of so shocking a crime in a town as moral as Parma, and one over which so great a Prince reigned, and so forth; these platitudes, moreover, he uttered slowly. In a word, the Duchessa found an honest man, but the weakest imaginable, and one who could not make up his mind to act. After a score of similar phrases interrupted by cries of impatience from Signora Sanseverina, he hit upon an excellent idea: the oath which he had given as Cavaliere d’onore forbade him to take part in any action against the Government.

Who can conceive the anxiety and despair of the Duchessa, who felt that time was flying? >

“But, at least, see the governor; tell him that I shall pursue Fabrizio’s murderers to hell itself!”

Despair increased the Duchessa's natural eloquence, but all this fire only made the Marchese more alarmed and doubled his irresolution; at the end of an hour he was less disposed to act than at the first moment.

This unhappy woman, who had reached the utmost limits of despair and knew well that the governor would refuse nothing to so rich a son-in-law, went so far as to fling herself at his feet; at this the Marchese's pusillanimity seemed to increase still further; he himself, at the sight of this strange spectacle, was afraid of being compromised unawares; but a singular thing happened: the Marchese, a good man at heart, was touched by the tears and by the posture, at his feet, of so beautiful and, above all, so influential a woman.

"I myself, noble and rich as I am," he said to himself, "will perhaps one day be at the feet of some Republican!" The Marchese burst into tears, and finally it was agreed that the Duchessa, in her capacity as Grand Mistress, should present him to the Princess, who would give him permission to convey to Fabrizio a little hamper, of the contents of which he would declare himself to know nothing.

The previous evening, before the Duchessa knew of Fabrizio's act of folly in going to the citadel, they had played at court a commedia dell'arte, and the Prince, who always reserved for himself the lover's part to be played with the Duchessa, had been so passionate in speaking to her of his affection that he would have been absurd, if, in Italy, an impassioned man or a Prince could ever be thought so.

The Prince, extremely shy, but always intensely serious in matters of love, met, in one of the corridors of the Castle, the Duchessa who was carrying off the Marchese Crescenzi, in great distress, to the Princess. He was so surprised and dazzled by the beauty, full of emotion, which her despair gave the Grand Mistress, that for the first time in his life he shewed character. With a more than imperious gesture he dismissed the Marchese, and began to make a declaration of love, according to all the rules, to the Duchessa. The Prince had doubtless prepared this speech long beforehand, for there were things in it that were quite reasonable.

“Since the conventions of my rank forbid me to give myself the supreme happiness of marrying you, I will swear to you upon the Blessed Sacrament never to marry without your permission in writing. I am well aware,” he added, “that I am making you forfeit the hand of a Prime Minister, a clever and extremely amiable man; but after all he is fifty-six, and I am not yet two-and-twenty. I should consider myself to be insulting you, and to deserve your refusal if I spoke to you of the advantages that there are apart from love; but everyone who takes an interest in money at my court speaks with admiration of the proof of his love which the Conte gives you, in leaving you the custodian of all that he possesses. I shall be only too happy to copy him in that respect. You will make a better use of my fortune than I, and you shall have the entire disposal of the annual sum which my Ministers hand over to the Intendant General of my Crown; so that it will be you, Signora Duchessa, who will decide upon the sums which I may spend each month.” The Duchessa found all these details very long; Fabrizio’s dangers pierced her heart.

“Then you do not know, Prince,” she cried, “that at this moment they are poisoning Fabrizio in your citadel! Save him! I accept everything.”

The arrangement of this speech was perfect in its clumsiness. At the mere mention of poison all the ease, all the good faith which this poor, moral Prince was putting into the conversation vanished in the twinkling of an eye; the Duchessa did not notice her tactlessness until it was too late to remedy it, and her despair was intensified, a thing she had believed to be impossible. “If I had not spoken of poison,” she said to herself, “he would grant me Fabrizio’s freedom. . . . O my dear Fabrizio,” she added, “so it is fated that it is I who must pierce your heart by my foolishness!”

It took the Duchessa all her time and all her coquetry to get the Prince back to his talk of passionate love; but even then he remained deeply offended. It was his mind alone that spoke; his heart had been frozen by the idea first of all of poison, and then by the other idea, as displeasing as the first was terrible: “They administer poison in my States, and without telling me! So Rassi wishes to dishonour me in the eyes of Europe! And God knows what I shall read text month in the Paris newspapers!”

Suddenly the heart of this shy young man was silent, his mind arrived at an idea.

“Dear Duchessa! You know whether I am attached to you. Your terrible ideas about poison are unfounded, I prefer to think; still, they give me food for thought, they make me almost forget for an instant the passion that I feel for you, which is the only passion that I have ever felt in all my life. I know that I am not attractive; I am only a boy, hopelessly in love; still, put me to the test.”

The Prince grew quite animated in using this language.

“Save Fabrizio, and I accept everything! No doubt I am carried away by the foolish fears of a mother’s heart; but send this moment to fetch Fabrizio from the citadel, that I may see him. If he is still alive, send him from the Palace to the town prison, where he can remain for months on end, if Your Highness requires, until his trial.”

The Duchessa saw with despair that the Prince, instead of granting with a word so simple a request, had turned sombre; he was very red, he looked at the Duchessa, then lowered his eyes, and his cheeks grew pale. The idea of poison put forward at the wrong moment, had suggested to him an idea worthy of his father or of Philip II; but he dared not express it in words.

“Listen, Signora,” he said at length, as though forcing himself to speak, and in a tone that was by no means gracious, “you look down on me as a child and, what is more, a creature without graces: very well, I am going to say something which is horrible, but which has just been suggested to me by the deep and true passion that I feel for you. If I believed for one moment in this poison, I should have taken action already, as in duty bound; but I see in your request only a passionate fancy, and one of which, I beg leave to state, I do not see all the consequences. You desire that I should act without consulting my Ministers, I who have been reigning for barely three months! You ask of me a great exception to my ordinary mode of action, which I regard as highly reasonable. It is you, Signora, who are here and now the Absolute Sovereign, you give me reason to hope in a matter which is everything to me; but, in an hour’s time, when this imaginary poison, when this nightmare has vanished, my presence will become an annoyance to you,

I shall forfeit your favour, Signora. Very well, I require an oath: swear to me, Signora, that if Fabrizio is restored to you safe and sound I shall obtain from you, in three months from now, all that my love can desire; you will assure the happiness of my entire life by placing at my disposal an hour of your own, and you will be wholly mine."

At that moment, the Castle clock struck two. "Ah! It is too late, perhaps," thought the Duchessa.

"I swear it," she cried, with a wild look in her eyes.

At once the Prince became another man; he ran to the far end of the gallery, where the Aide-deCamp's room was.

"General Fontana, dash off to the citadel this instant, go up as quickly as possible to the room in which they have put Signor del Dongo, and bring him to me; I must speak to him within twenty minutes, fifteen if possible."

"Ah, General," cried the Duchessa, who had followed the Prince, "one minute may decide my life. A report which is doubtless false makes me fear poison for Fabrizio: shout to him, as soon as you are within earshot, not to eat. If he has touched his dinner, make him swallow an emetic, tell him that it is I who wish it, employ force if necessary; tell him that I am following close behind you, and I shall be obliged to you all my life."

"Signora Duchessa, my horse is saddled, I am generally considered a pretty good horseman, and I shall ride hell for leather; I shall be at the citadel eight minutes before you."

"And I, Signora Duchessa," cried the Prince, "I ask of you four of those eight minutes."

The Aide-deCamp had vanished, he was a man who had no other merit than that of his horsemanship. No sooner had he shut the door than the young Prince, who seemed to have acquired some character, seized the Duchessa's hand.

"Condescend, Signora," he said to her with passion, "to come with me to the chapel." The Duchessa, at a loss for the first time in her life, followed him

without uttering a word. The Prince and she passed rapidly down the whole length of the great gallery of the Palace, the chapel being at the other end. On entering the chapel, the Prince fell on his knees, almost as much before the Duchessa as before the altar.

“Repeat the oath,” he said with passion: “if you had been fair, if the wretched fact of my being a Prince had not been against me, you would have granted me out of pity for my love what you now owe me because you have sworn it.”

“If I see Fabrizio again not poisoned, if he is alive in a week from now, if His Highness will appoint him Coadjutor with eventual succession to Archbishop Landriani, my honour, my womanly dignity, everything shall be trampled under foot, and I will give myself to His Highness.”

“But, dear friend,” said the Prince with a blend of timid anxiety and affection which was quite pleasing, “I am afraid of some ambush which I do not understand, and which might destroy my happiness; that would kill me. If the Archbishop opposes me with one of those ecclesiastical reasons which keep things dragging on for year after year, what will become of me? You see that I am behaving towards you with entire good faith; are you going to be a little Jesuit with me?”

“No: in good faith, if Fabrizio is saved, if, so far as lies in your power, you make him Coadjutor and a future Archbishop, I dishonour myself and I am yours.

“Your Highness undertakes to write approved on the margin of a request which His Grace the Archbishop will present to you in a week from now.”

“I will sign you a blank sheet; reign over me and over my States,” cried the Prince, colouring with happiness and really beside himself. He demanded a second oath. He was so deeply moved that he forgot the shyness that came so naturally to him, and, in this Palace chapel in which they were alone, murmured in an undertone to the Duchessa things which, uttered three days earlier, would have altered the opinion that she held of him. But in her the despair which Fabrizio’s danger had caused her had given place to horror at the promise which had been wrung from her.

The Duchessa was completely upset by what she had just done. If she did not yet feel all the fearful bitterness of the word she had given, it was because her attention was occupied in wondering whether General Fontana would be able to reach the citadel in time.

To free herself from the madly amorous speeches of this boy, and to change the topic of conversation, she praised a famous picture by the Parmigianino, which hung over the high altar of the chapel.

“Be so good as to permit me to send it to you,” said the Prince.

“I accept,” replied the Duchessa; “but allow me to go and meet Fabrizio.”

With a distracted air she told her coachman to put his horses into a gallop. On the bridge over the moat of the citadel she met General Fontana and Fabrizio, who were coming out on foot.

“Have you eaten?”

“No, by a miracle.”

The Duchessa flung her arms round Fabrizio’s neck and fell in a faint which lasted for an hour, and gave fears first for her life and afterwards for her reason.

The governor Fabio Conti had turned white with rage at the sight of General Fontana: he had been so slow in obeying the Prince’s orders that the Aide-deCamp, who supposed that the Duchessa was going to occupy the position of reigning mistress, had ended by losing his temper. The governor reckoned upon making Fabrizio’s illness last for two or three days, and “now,” he said to himself, “the General, a man from the court, will find that insolent fellow writhing in the agony which is my revenge for his escape.”

Fabio Conti, lost in thought, stopped in the guard-room on the ground floor of the Torre Farnese, from which he hastily dismissed the soldiers: he did not wish to have any witnesses of the scene which was about to be played. Five minutes later he was petrified with astonishment on hearing Fabrizio’s voice, on seeing him, alive and alert, giving General Fontana an account of his imprisonment. He vanished.

Fabrizio shewed himself a perfect “gentleman” in his interview with the Prince. For one thing, he did not wish to assume the air of a boy who takes fright at nothing. The Prince asked him kindly how he felt: “Like a man, Serene Highness, who is dying of hunger, having fortunately neither broken my fast nor dined.” After having had the honour to thank the Prince, he requested permission to visit the Archbishop before surrendering himself at the town prison. The Prince had turned prodigiously pale, when his boyish head had been penetrated by the idea that this poison was not altogether a chimaera of the Duchessa’s imagination. Absorbed in this cruel thought, he did not at first reply to the request to see the Archbishop which Fabrizio addressed to him; then he felt himself obliged to atone for his distraction by a profusion of graciousness.

“Go out alone, Signore, walk through the streets of my capital unguarded. About ten or eleven o’clock you will return to prison, where I hope that you will not long remain.”

On the morrow of this great day, the most remarkable of his life, the Prince fancied himself a little Napoleon; he had read that that great man had been kindly treated by several of the beauties of his court. Once established as a Napoleon in love, he remembered that he had been one also under fire. His heart was still quite enraptured by the firmness of his conduct with the Duchessa. The consciousness of having done something difficult made him another man altogether for a fortnight; he became susceptible to generous considerations; he had some character.

He began this day by burning the patent of Conte made out in favour of Rassi, which had been lying on his desk for a month. He degraded General Fabio Conti, and called upon Colonel Lange, his successor, for the truth as to the poison. Lange, a gallant Polish officer, intimidated the gaolers, and reported that there had been a design to poison Signor del Dongo’s breakfast; but too many people would have had to be taken into confidence. Arrangements to deal with his dinner were more successful; and, but for the arrival of General Fontana, Signor del Dongo was a dead man. The Prince was dismayed; but, as he was really in love, it was a consolation for him to be able to say to himself: “It appears that I really did save Signor del Dongo’s life, and the Duchessa will never dare fail to keep the word she has given me.” Another idea struck him: “My business is a great deal more

difficult than I thought; everyone is agreed that the Buchessa is a woman of infinite cleverness, here my policy and my heart go together. It would be divine for me if she would consent to be my Prime Minister."

That evening, the Prince was so infuriated by the horrors that he had discovered that he would not take part in the play.

"I should be more than happy," he said to the Buchessa, "if you would reign over my States as you reign over my heart. To begin with, I am going to tell you how I have spent my day." He then told her everything, very exactly: the burning of Conte Rassi's patent, the appointment of Lange, his report on the poisoning, and so forth. "I find that I have very little experience for ruling. The Conte humiliates me by his jokes. He makes jokes even at the Council; and, in society, he says things the truth of which you are going to disprove; he says that I am a boy whom he leads wherever he chooses. Though one is a Prince, Signora, one is none the less a man, and these things annoy one. In order to give an air of improbability to the stories which Signor Mosca may repeat, they have made me summon to the Ministry that dangerous scoundrel Rassi, and now there is that General Conti who believes him to be still so powerful that he dare not admit that it was he or the Raversi who ordered him to destroy your nephew; I have a good mind simply to send General Fabio Conti before the court; the judges will see whether he is guilty of attempted poisoning."

"But, Prince, have you judges?"

"What!" said the Prince in astonishment.

"You have certain learned counsel who walk the streets with a solemn air; apart from that they always give the judgment that will please the dominant party at your court."

While the young Prince, now scandalised, uttered expressions which shewed his candour far more than his sagacity, the Buchessa was saying to herself:

"Does it really suit me to let Conti be disgraced? No, certainly not; for then his daughter's marriage with that honest simpleton the Marchese Crescenzi becomes impossible."

On this topic there was an endless discussion between the Duchessa and the Prince. The Prince was dazed with admiration. In consideration of the marriage of Clelia Conti to the Marchese Crescenzi, but on that express condition, which he laid down in an angry scene with the ex-governor, the Prince pardoned his attempt to poison; but, on the Duchessa's advice, banished him until the date of his daughter's marriage. The Duchessa imagined that it was no longer love that she felt for Fabrizio, but she was still passionately anxious for the marriage of Clelia Conti to the Marchese; " there lay in that the vague hope that gradually she might see Fabrizio's preoccupation disappear.

The Prince, rapturously happy, wished that same evening publicly to disgrace the Minister Rassi. The Duchessa said to him with a laugh:

"Do you know a saying of Napoleon? A man placed in an exalted position, with the eyes of the whole world on him, ought never to allow himself to make violent movements. But this evening it is too late, let us leave business till tomorrow."

She wished to give herself time to consult the Conte, to whom she repeated very accurately the whole of the evening's conversation, suppressing however the frequent allusions to a promise which was poisoning her life. The Duchessa hoped to make herself so indispensable that she would be able to obtain an indefinite adjournment by saying to the Prince: "If you have the barbarity to insist upon subjecting me to that humiliation, which I will never forgive you, I leave your States the day after."

Consulted by the Duchessa as to the fate of Rassi, the Conte shewed himself most philosophic. General Fabio Conti and he went for a tour of Piedmont.

A singular difficulty arose in the trial of Fabrizio: the judges wished to acquit him by acclamation, and at the first sitting of the court. The Conte was obliged to use threats to enforce that the trial should last for at least a week, and the judges take the trouble to hear all the witnesses. "These fellows are always the same," he said to himself.

The day after his acquittal, Fabrizio del Dongo at last took possession of the place of Grand Vicar to the worthy Archbishop Landriani. On the same day

the Prince signed the dispatches necessary to obtain Fabrizio's nomination as Coadjutor with eventual succession, and less than two months afterwards he was installed in that office.

Everyone complimented the Duchessa on her nephew's air of gravity; the fact was that he was in despair. The day after his deliverance, followed by the dismissal and banishment of General Fabio Conti and the Duchessa's arrival in high favour, Clelia had taken refuge with Contessa Contarmi, her aunt, a woman of great wealth and great age, occupied exclusively in looking after her health. Clelia could, had she wished, have seen Fabrizio; but anyone acquainted with her previous commitments who had seen her behaviour now might have thought that with her lover's danger her love for him also had ceased. Not only did Fabrizio pass as often as he decently could before the palazzo Contarini, he had also succeeded, after endless trouble, in taking a little apartment opposite the windows of its first floor. On one occasion Clelia, having gone to the window without thinking, to see a procession pass, drew back at once, as though terror-stricken; she had caught sight of Fabrizio, dressed in black, but as a workman in very humble circumstances, looking at her from one of the windows of this rookery, which had panes of oiled paper, like his cell in the Torre Farnese. Fabrizio would fain have been able to persuade himself that Clelia was shunning him in consequence of her father's disgrace, which current report put down to the Duchessa; but he knew only too well another cause for this aloofness, and nothing could distract him from his melancholy.

He had been left unmoved by his acquittal, his installation in a fine office, the first that he had had to fill in his life, by his fine position in society, and finally by the assiduous court that was paid to him by all the ecclesiastics and all the devout laity in the diocese. The charming apartment that he occupied in the palazzo Sanseverina was no longer adequate. Greatly to her delight, the Duchessa was obliged to give up to him all the second floor of her palazzo and two fine rooms on the first, which were always filled with people awaiting their turn to pay their respects to the young Coadjutor. The clause securing his eventual succession had created a surprising effect in the country; people now ascribed to Fabrizio as virtues all those firm qualities in his character which before had so greatly scandalised the poor, foolish courtiers.

It was a great lesson in philosophy to Fabrizio to find himself perfectly insensible of all these honours, and far more unhappy in this magnificent apartment, with ten flunkeys wearing his livery, than he had been in his wooden cell in the Torre Farnese, surrounded by hideous gaolers, and always in fear for his life. His mother and sister, the Duchessa V —— , who came to Parma to see him in his glory, were struck by his profound melancholy. The Marchesa del Dongo, now the least romantic of women, was so greatly alarmed by it that she imagined that they must, in the Torre Farnese, have given him some slow poison. Despite her extreme discretion, she felt it her duty to speak of so extraordinary a melancholy, and Fabrizio replied only by tears.

A swarm of advantages, due to his brilliant position, produced no other effect on him than to make him ill-tempered. His brother, that vain soul gangrened by the vilest selfishness, wrote him what was almost an official letter of congratulation, and in this letter was enclosed a draft for fifty thousand francs, in order that he might, said the new Marchese, purchase horses and a carriage worthy of his name. Fabrizio sent this money to his younger sister, who was poorly married.

Conte Mosca had ordered a fine translation to be made, in Italian, of the genealogy of the family Valserra del Dongo, originally published in Latin by Fabrizio, Archbishop of Parma. He had it splendidly printed, with the Latin text on alternate pages; the engravings had been reproduced by superb lithographs made in Paris. The Duchessa had asked that a fine portrait of Fabrizio should be placed opposite that of the old Archbishop. This translation was published as being the work of Fabrizio during his first imprisonment. But all the spirit was crushed out of our hero; even the vanity so natural to mankind; he did not deign to read a single page of this work which was attributed to himself. His social position made it incumbent upon him to present a magnificently bound copy to the Prince, who felt that he owed him some compensation for the cruel death to which he had come so near, and accorded him the grand entry into his bed-chamber, a favour which confers the rank of Excellency.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The only moments in which Fabrizio had any chance of escaping from his profound melancholy were those which he spent hidden behind a pane, the glass of which he had had replaced by a sheet of oiled paper, in the window of his apartment opposite the palazzo Contarmi, in which, as we know, Clelia had taken refuge; on the few occasions on which he had seen her since his leaving the citadel, he had been profoundly distressed by a striking change, and one that seemed to him of the most evil augury. Since her fall, Clelia's face had assumed a character of nobility and seriousness that was truly remarkable; one would have called her a woman of thirty. In this extraordinary change, Fabrizio caught the reflexion of some firm resolution. "At every moment of the day," he said to himself, "she is swearing to herself to be faithful to the vow she made to the Madonna, and never to see me again."

Fabrizio guessed a part only of Clelia's miseries; she knew that her father, having fallen into deep disgrace, could not return to Parma and reappear at court (without which life for him was impossible) until the day of her marriage to the Marchese Crescenzi; she wrote to her father that she desired this marriage. The General had then retired to Turin, where he was ill with grief. Truly, the counter-effect of that desperate remedy had been to add ten years to her age.

She had soon discovered that Fabrizio had a window opposite the palazzo Contarmi; but only once had she had the misfortune to behold him; as soon as she saw the poise of a head or a man's figure that in any way resembled his, she at once shut her eyes. Her profound piety and her confidence in the help of the Madonna were from then onwards her sole resources. She had the grief of feeling no respect for her father; the character of her future husband seemed to her perfectly lifeless and on a par with the emotional manners of high society; finally she adored a man whom she must never see again, and who at the same time had certain rights over her. She would need, after her marriage, to go and live two hundred leagues from Parma.

Fabrizio was aware of Clelia's intense modesty, he knew how greatly any extraordinary enterprise, that might form a .subject for gossip, were it discovered, was bound to displease her. And yet, driven to extremes by the excess of his melancholy and by Clelia's constantly turning away her eyes from him, he made bold to try to purchase two of the servants of Signora Contarini, her aunt. One day, at nightfall, Fabrizio, dressed as a prosperous countryman, presented himself at the door of the palazzo, where one of the servants whom he had bribed was waiting for him; he announced himself as coming from Turin and bearing letters for Clelia from her father. The servant went to deliver the message, and took him up to an immense ante-room on the first floor of the palazzo. It was here that Fabrizio passed what was perhaps the most anxious quarter of an hour in his life. If Clelia rejected him, there was no more hope of peace for his mind. "To put an end to the incessant worries which my new dignity heaps upon me, I shall remove from the Church an unworthy priest, and, under an assumed name, seek refuge in some Charterhouse." At length the servant came to inform him that Signorina Clelia Conti was willing to receive him. Our hero's courage failed him completely; he almost collapsed with fear as he climbed the stair to the second floor.

Clelia was sitting at a little table on which stood a single candle. No sooner had she recognised Fabrizio under his disguise than she rose and fled, hiding at the far end of the room.

"This is how you care for my salvation!" she cried to him, hiding her face in her hands. "You know very well, when my father was at the point of death after taking poison, I made a vow to the Madonna that I would never see you. I have never failed to keep that vow save on that day, the most wretched day of my life, when I felt myself bound by conscience to snatch you from death. It is already far more than you deserve if, by a strained and no doubt criminal interpretation of my vow, I consent to listen to you."

This last sentence so astonished Fabrizio that it took him some moments to grasp its joyful meaning. He had expected the most fiery anger, and to see Clelia fly from the room; at length his presence of mind returned, and he extinguished the one candle. Although he believed that he had understood Clelia's orders, he was trembling all over as he advanced towards the end of the room, where she had taken refuge behind a sofa; he did not know

whether it would offend her if he kissed her hand; she was all tremulous with love and threw herself into his arms.

“Dear Fabrizio,” she said to him, “how long you have been in coming! I can only speak to you for a moment, for I am sure it is a great sin; and when I promised never to see you, I am sure I meant also to promise not to hear you speak. But how could you pursue with such barbarity the idea of vengeance that my poor father had? For, after all, it was he who was first nearly poisoned to assist your escape. Ought you not to do something for me, who have exposed my reputation to such risks in order to save you? And besides you are now bound absolutely in Holy Orders; you could not marry me any longer, even though I should find a way of getting rid of that odious Marchese. And then how did you dare, on the afternoon of the procession, have the effrontery to look at me in broad daylight, and so violate, in the most flagrant fashion, the holy promise that I had made to the Madonna?”

Fabrizio clasped her in his arms, carried out of himself by his surprise and joy.

A conversation which began with such a quantity of things to be said could not finish for a long time. Fabrizio told her the exact truth as to her father’s banishment; the Duchessa had had no part in it whatsoever, for the simple reason that she had never for a single instant believed that the idea of poison had originated with General Conti; she had always thought that it was a little game on the part of the Raversi faction, who wished to drive Conte Mosca from Parma. This historical truth developed at great length made Clelia very happy; she was wretched at having to hate anyone who belonged to Fabrizio. Now she no longer regarded the Duchessa with a jealous eye.

The happiness established by this evening lasted only a few days.

The worthy Don Cesare arrived from Turin; and, taking courage in the perfect honesty of his heart, ventured to send in his name to the Duchessa. After asking her to give him her word that she would not abuse the confidence he was about to repose in her, he admitted that his brother, led astray by a false point of honour, and thinking himself challenged and lowered in public opinion by Fabrizio’s escape, had felt bound to avenge himself.

Don Cesare had not been speaking for two minutes before his cause was won: his perfect goodness had touched the Duchessa, who was by no means accustomed to such a spectacle. He appealed to her as a novelty.

“Hasten the marriage between the General’s daughter and the Marchese Crescenzi, and I give you my word that I will do all that lies in my power to ensure that the General is received as though he were returning from a tour abroad. I shall invite him to dinner; does that satisfy you? No doubt there will be some coolness at the beginning, and the General must on no account be in a hurry to ask for his place as governor of the citadel. But you know that I have a friendly feeling for the Marchese, and I shall retain no rancour towards his father-in-law.”

Fortified by these words, Don Cesare came to tell his niece that she held in her hands the life of her father, who was ill with despair. For many months past he had not appeared at any court.

Clelia decided to go to visit her father, who was hiding under an assumed name in a village near Turin; for he had supposed that the court of Parma would demand his extradition from that of Turin, to put him on his trial. She found him ill and almost insane. That same evening she wrote Fabrizio a letter threatening an eternal rupture. On receiving this letter, Fabrizio, who was developing a character closely resembling that of his mistress, went into retreat in the convent of Velleja, situated in the mountains, ten leagues from Parma. Clelia wrote him a letter of ten pages: she had sworn to him, before, that she would never marry the Marchese without his consent; now she asked this of him, and Fabrizio granted it from his retreat at Valleja, in a letter full of the purest friendship.

On receiving this letter, the friendliness of which, it must be admitted, irritated her, Clelia herself fixed the day of her wedding, the festivities surrounding which enhanced still further the brilliance with which the court of Parma, that winter, shone.

Ranuccio–Ernesto V was a miser at heart; but he was desperately in love, and he hoped to establish the Duchessa permanently at his court; he begged his mother to accept a very considerable sum of money, and to give entertainments. The Grand Mistress contrived to make an admirable use of

this increase of wealth; the entertainments at Parma, that winter, recalled the great days of the court of Milan and of that charming Prince Eugène, Viceroy of Italy, whose virtues have left so lasting a memory.

His duties as Coadjutor had summoned Fabrizio back to Parma; but he announced that, for spiritual reasons, he would continue his retreat in the small apartment which his protector, Monsignor Landriani, had forced him to take in the Archbishop's Palace; and he went to shut himself up there, accompanied by a single servant. Thus he was present at none of the brilliant festivities of the court, an abstention which won for him at Parma, and throughout his future diocese, an immense reputation for sanctity. An unforeseen consequence of this retreat, inspired in Fabrizio solely by his profound and hopeless sorrow, was that the good Archbishop Landriani, who had always loved him, began to be slightly jealous of him. The Archbishop felt it his duty (and rightly) to attend all the festivities at court, as is the custom in Italy. On these occasions he wore a ceremonial costume, which was, more or less, the same as that in which he was to be seen in the choir of his Cathedral. The hundreds of servants gathered in the colonnaded ante-chamber of the Palace never failed to rise and ask for a blessing from Monsignore, who was kind enough to stop and give it them. It was in one of these moments of solemn silence that Monsignor Landriani heard a voice say: "Our Archbishop goes out to bails, and Monsignor del Dongo never leaves his room!"

>From that moment the immense favour that Fabrizio had enjoyed in the Archbishop's Palace was at an end; but he could now fly with his own wings. All this conduct, which had been inspired only by the despair in which Clelia's marriage plunged him, was regarded as due to a simple and sublime piety, and the faithful read, as a work of edification, the translation of the genealogy of his family, which reeked of the most insane vanity. The booksellers prepared a lithographed edition of his portrait, which was bought up in a few days, and mainly by the humbler classes; the engraver, in his ignorance, had reproduced round Fabrizio's portrait a number of the ornaments which ought only to be found on the portraits of Bishops, and to which a Coadjutor could have no claim. The Archbishop saw one of these portraits, and his rage knew no bounds; he sent for Fabrizio and addressed him in the harshest words, and in terms which his passion rendered at times extremely coarse. Fabrizio required no effort, as may well be imagined, to

conduct himself as Fénelon would have done in similar circumstances; he listened to the Archbishop with all the humility and respect possible; and, when the prelate had ceased speaking, told him the whole story of the translation of the genealogy made by Conte Mosca's orders, at the time of his first imprisonment. It had been published with a worldly object, which had always seemed to him hardly befitting a man of his cloth. As for the portrait, he had been entirely unconcerned with the second edition, as with the first; and the bookseller having sent to him, at the Archbishop's Palace, during his retreat, twenty-four copies of this second edition, he had sent his servant to buy a twenty-fifth; and, having learned in this way that the portrait was being sold for thirty soldi, he had sent a hundred francs in payment of the twenty-four copies.

All these arguments, albeit set forth in the most reasonable terms by a man who had many other sorrows in his heart, lashed the Archbishop's anger to madness; he went so far as to accuse Fabrizio of hypocrisy.

"That is what these common people are like," Fabrizio said to himself, "even when they have brains!"

He had at the time a more serious anxiety; this was his aunt's letters, in which she absolutely insisted on his coming back to occupy his apartment in the palazzo Sanseverina, or at least coming to see her sometimes. There Fabrizio was certain of hearing talk of the splendid festivities given by the Marchese Crescenzi on the occasion of his marriage; and this was what he was not sure of his ability to endure without creating a scene.

When the marriage ceremony was celebrated, for eight whole days in succession Fabrizio vowed himself to the most complete silence, after ordering his servant and the members of the Archbishop's household with whom he had any dealings never to utter a word to him.

Monsignor Landriani having learned of this new affectation sent for Fabrizio far more often than usual, and tried to engage him in long conversations; he even obliged him to attend conferences with certain Canons from the country, who complained that the Archbishop had infringed their privileges. Fabrizio took all these things with the perfect indifference of a man who has

other thoughts on his mind. “It would be better for me,” he thought, “to become a Carthusian; I should suffer less among the rocks of Velleja.”

He went to see his aunt, and could not restrain his tears as he embraced her. She found him so greatly altered, his eyes, still more enlarged by his extreme thinness, had so much the air of starting from his head, and he himself presented so pinched and unhappy an appearance, that at this first encounter the Duchessa herself could not restrain her tears either; but a moment later, when she had reminded herself that all this change in the appearance of this handsome young man had been caused by Clelia’s marriage, her feelings were almost equal in vehemence to those of the Archbishop, although more skilfully controlled. She was so barbarous as to discourse at length of certain picturesque details which had been a feature of the charming entertainments given by the Marchese Crescenzi. Fabrizio made no reply; but his eyes closed slightly with a convulsive movement, and he became even paler than he already was, which at first sight would have seemed impossible. In these moments of keen grief, his pallor assumed a greenish hue.

Conte Mosca joined them, and what he then saw, a thing which seemed to him incredible, finally and completely cured him of the jealousy which Fabrizio had never ceased to inspire in him. This able man employed the most delicate and ingenious turns of speech in an attempt to restore to Fabrizio some interest in the things of this world. The Conte had always felt for him a great esteem and a certain degree of friendship; this friendship, being no longer counterbalanced by jealousy, became at that moment almost devotion. “There’s no denying it, he has paid dearly for his fine fortune,” he said to himself, going over the tale of Fabrizio’s misadventures. On the pretext of letting him see the picture by the Parmigianino which the Prince had sent to the Duchessa, the Conte drew Fabrizio aside.

“Now, my friend, let us speak as man to man: can I help you in any way? You need not be afraid of any questions on my part; still, can money be of use to you, can power help you? Speak, I am at your orders; if you prefer to write, write to me.”

Fabrizio embraced him tenderly and spoke of the picture.

“Your conduct is a masterpiece of the finest policy,” the Conte said to him, returning to the light tone of their previous conversation; “you are laying up for yourself a very agreeable future, the Prince respects you, the people venerate you, your little-worn black coat gives Monsignor Landriani some bad nights. I have some experience of life, and I can swear to you that I should not know what advice to give you to improve upon what I see. Your first step in the world at the age of twenty-five has carried you to perfection. People talk of you a great deal at court; and do you know to what you owe that distinction, unique at your age? To the little-worn black coat. The Duchessa and I have at our disposal, as you know, Petrarch’s old house on that fine slope in the middle of the forest, near the Po; if ever you are weary of the little mischief-makings of envy, it has occurred to me that you might be the successor of Petrarch, whose fame will enhance your own.” The Conte was racking his brains to make a smile appear on that anchorite face, but failed. What made the change more striking was that, before this latest phase, if Fabrizio’s features had a defect, it was that of presenting sometimes, at the wrong moment, an expression of gaiety and pleasure.

The Conte did not let him go without telling him that, notwithstanding his retreat, it would be perhaps an affectation if he did not appear at court the following Saturday, which was the Princess’s birthday. These words were a dagger-thrust to Fabrizio. “Great God!” he thought, “what have I let myself in for here?” He could not think without shuddering of the meeting that might occur at court. This idea absorbed every other; he thought that the only thing left to him was to arrive at the Palace at the precise moment at which the doors of the rooms would be opened.

And so it happened that the name of Monsignor del Dongo was one of the first to be announced on the evening of the gala reception, and the Princess greeted him with the greatest possible distinction. Fabrizio’s eyes were fastened on the clock, and, at the instant at which it marked the twentieth minute of his presence in the room, he was rising to take his leave, when the Prince joined his mother. After paying his respects to him for some moments, Fabrizio was again, by a skilful stratagem, making his way to the door, when there befell at his expense one of those little trifling points of court etiquette which the Grand Mistress knew so well how to handle: the Chamberlain in waiting ran after him to tell him that he had been put down to make up the Prince’s table at whist. At Parma this was a signal honour,

and far above the rank which the Coadjutor held in society. To play whist with the Prince was a marked honour even for the Archbishop. At the Chamberlain's words Fabrizio felt his heart pierced, and although a lifelong enemy of anything like a scene in public, he was on the point of going to tell him that he had been seized with a sudden fit of giddiness; but he reflected that he would be exposed to questions and polite expressions of sympathy, more intolerable even than the game. That day he had a horror of speaking.

Fortunately the General of the Friars Minor happened to be one of the prominent personages who had come to pay their respects to the Princess. This friar, a most learned man, a worthy rival of the Fontanas and the Duvoisins, had taken his place in a far corner of the room: Fabrizio took up a position facing him, so that he could not see the door, and began to talk theology. But he could not prevent his ear from hearing a servant announce the Signor Marchese and Signora Marchesa Crescenzi. Fabrizio, to his surprise, felt a violent impulse of anger.

"If I were Borso Valserra," he said to himself (this being one of the generals of the first Sforza), "I should go and stab that lout of a Marchese, and with that very same dagger with the ivory handle which Clelia gave me on that happy day, and I should teach him to have the insolence to present himself with his Marchesa in a room in which I am."

His expression altered so greatly that the General of the Friars Minor said to him:

"Does Your Excellency feel unwell?"

"I have a raging headache . . . these lights are hurting me . . . and I am staying here only because I have been put down for the Prince's whist-table."

On hearing this the General of the Friars Minor, who was of plebeian origin, was so disconcerted that, not knowing what to do, he began to bow to Fabrizio, who, for his part, far more seriously disturbed than the General, started to talk with a strange volubility: he noticed that there was a great silence in the room behind him, but would not turn round to look. Suddenly a baton tapped a desk; a ritornello was played, and the famous Signora P

—— sang that air of Cimarosa, at one time so popular: Quelle pupille tenere!

Fabrizio stood firm throughout the opening bars, but presently his anger melted away, and he felt a compelling need to shed tears. “Great God!” he said to himself, “what a ridiculous scene! and with my cloth, too!” He felt it wiser to talk about himself.

“These violent headaches, when I do anything to thwart them, as I am doing this evening,” he said to the General of the Minorites, “end in floods of tears which provide food for scandal in a man of our calling; and so I request Your Illustrious Reverence to allow me to look at him while I cry, and not to pay any attention.”

“Our Father Provincial at Catanzaro suffers from the same disability,” said the General of the Minorites. And he began in an undertone a long narrative.

The absurdity of this story, which included the details of the Father Provincial’s evening meals, made Fabrizio smile, a thing which had not happened to him for a long time; but presently he ceased to listen to the General of the Minorites. Signora P —— was singing, with divine talent, an air of Pergolese (the Duchessa had a fondness for old music). She was interrupted by a slight sound, a few feet away from Fabrizio; for the first time in the evening, he turned his head, to look. The chair that had been the cause of this faint creak in the woodwork of the floor was occupied by the Marchesa Crescenzi whose eyes, filled with tears, met the direct gaze of Fabrizio’s which were in much the same state. The Marchesa bent her head; Fabrizio continued to gaze at her for some moments: he made a thorough study of that head loaded with diamonds; but his gaze expressed anger and disdain. Then, saying to himself: “and my eyes shall never look upon you,” he turned back to his Father General, and said to him:

“There, now, my weakness is taking me worse than ever.”

And indeed, Fabrizio wept hot tears for more than half an hour. Fortunately, a Symphony of Mozart, horribly mutilated, as is the way in Italy, came to his rescue and helped him to dry his tears.

He stood firm and did not turn his eyes towards the Marchesa Crescenzi; but Signora P —— sang again, and Fabrizio's soul, soothed by his tears, arrived at a state of perfect repose. Then life appeared to him in a new light. "Am I pretending," he asked himself, "to be able to forget her in the first few moments? Would such a thing be possible?" The idea came to him: "Can I be more unhappy than I have been for the last two months? Then, if nothing can add to my anguish, why resist the pleasure of seeing her? She has forgotten her vows; she is fickle: are not all women so? But who could deny her a heavenly beauty? She has a look in her eyes that sends me into ecstasies, whereas I have to make an effort to force myself to look at the women who are considered the greatest beauties! Very well, why not let myself be enraptured? It will be at least a moment of respite."

Fabrizio had some knowledge of men, but no experience of the passions, otherwise he would have told himself that this momentary pleasure, to which he was about to yield, would render futile all the efforts that he had been making for the last two months to forget Clelia.

That poor woman would not have come to this party save under compulsion from her husband; even then she wished to slip away after half an hour, on the excuse of her health, but the Marchese assured her that to send for her carriage to go away, when many carriages were still arriving, would be a thing absolutely without precedent, which might even be interpreted as an indirect criticism of the party given by the Princess.

"In my capacity as Cavaliere d'onore," the Marchese added, "I have to remain in the drawing-room at the Princess's orders, until everyone has gone. There may be and no doubt will be orders to be given to the servants, they are so careless! And would you have a mere Gentleman Usher usurp that honour?"

Clelia resigned herself; she had not seen Fabrizio; she still hoped that he might not have come to this party. But at the moment when the concert was about to begin, the Princess having given the ladies leave to be seated, Clelia, who was not at all alert in that sort of thing, let all the best places near the Princess be snatched from her, and was obliged to go and look for a chair at the end of the room, in the very corner to which Fabrizio had withdrawn. When she reached her chair, the costume, unusual in such a

place, of the General of the Friars Minor caught her eye, and at first she did not observe the other man, slim and dressed in a plain black coat, who was talking to him; nevertheless a certain secret impulse brought her gaze to rest on this man. “Everyone here is wearing uniform, or a richly embroidered coat: who can that young man be in such a plain black coat?” She was looking at him, profoundly attentive, when a lady, taking her seat beside her, caused her chair to move. Fabrizio turned his head: she did not recognise him, he had so altered. At first she said to herself: “That is like him, it must be his elder brother; but I thought there were only a few years between them, and that is a man of forty.” Suddenly she recognised him by a movement of his lips.

“Poor man, how he has suffered!” she said to herself. And she bent her head, bowed down by grief, and not in fidelity to her vow. Her heart was convulsed with pity; “after nine months in prison, he did not look anything like that.” She did not look at him again; but, without actually turning her eyes in his direction, she could see all his movements.

After the concert, she saw him go up to the Prince’s card-table, placed a few feet from the throne; she breathed a sigh of relief when Fabrizio was thus removed to a certain distance from her.

But the Marchese Crescenzi had been greatly annoyed to see his wife relegated to a place so far from the throne; all evening he had been occupied in persuading a lady seated three chairs away from the Princess, whose husband was under a financial obligation to him, that she would do well to change places with the Marchesa. The poor woman resisting, as was natural, he went in search of the debtor husband, who let his better half hear the sad voice of reason, and finally the Marchese had the pleasure of effecting the exchange; he went to find his wife. “You are always too modest,” he said to her. “Why walk like that with downcast eyes? Anyone would take you for one of those cits’ wives astonished at finding themselves here, whom everyone else is astonished, too, to see here. That fool of a Grand Mistress does nothing else but collect them! And they talk of retarding the advance of Jacobinism! Remember that your husband occupies the first position, among the gentlemen, at the Princess’s court; and that even should the Republicans succeed in suppressing the court, and even the nobility, your husband would

still be the richest man in this State. That is an idea which you do not keep sufficiently in your head."

The chair on which the Marchese had the pleasure of installing his wife was but six paces from the Prince's card-table: she saw Fabrizio only in profile, but she found him grown so thin, he had, above all, the air of being so far above everything that might happen in this world, he who before would never let any incident pass without making his comment, that she finally arrived at the terrible conclusion: Fabrizio had altogether changed; he had forgotten her; if he had grown so thin, that was the effect of the severe fasts to which his piety subjected him. Clelia was confirmed in this sad thought by the conversation of all her neighbours: the name of the Coadjutor was on every tongue; they sought a reason for the signal favour which they saw conferred upon him: for him, so young, to be admitted to the Prince's table! They marvelled at the polite indifference and the air of pride with which he threw down his cards, even when he had His Highness for a partner.

"But this is incredible!" cried certain old courtiers; "his aunt's favour has quite turned his head. . . . But, mercifully, it won't last; our Sovereign does not like people to put on these little airs of superiority." The Duchessa approached the Prince; the courtiers, who kept at a most respectful distance from the card-table, so that they could hear only a few stray words of the Prince's conversation, noticed that Fabrizio blushed deeply. "His aunt has been teaching him a lesson," they said to themselves, "about those grand airs of indifference." Fabrizio had just caught the sound of Clelia's voice, she was replying to the Princess, who, in making her tour of the ball-room, had addressed a few words to the wife of her Cavaliere d'onore. The moment arrived when Fabrizio had to change his place at the whist-table; he then found himself directly opposite Clelia, and gave himself up repeatedly to the pleasure of contemplating her. The poor Marchesa, feeling his gaze rest upon her, lost countenance altogether. More than once she forgot what she owed to her vow: in her desire to read what was going on in Fabrizio's heart, she fixed her eyes on him.

The Prince's game ended, the ladies rose to go into the supper-room. There was some slight confusion. Fabrizio found himself close to Clelia; his mind was still quite made up, but he happened to recognise a faint perfume which she used on her clothes; this sensation overthrew all the resolutions that he

had made. He approached her and repeated, in an undertone and as though he were speaking to himself, two lines from that sonnet of Petrarch which he had sent her from Lake Maggiore, printed on a silk handkerchief:

“Nessum visse giammai più di me lieto;

Nessun vive più tristo e giorni e notti.”

“No, he has not forgotten me,” Clelia told herself with a transport of joy. “That fine soul is not inconstant!”

“Esser pò in prima ogni impossibil cosa

Ch’altri che morte od ella sani il colpo

Ch’Amor co’ suoi begli occhi al cor m’impresse,”

Clelia ventured to repeat to herself these lines of Petrarch.

The Princess withdrew immediately after supper; the Prince had gone with her to her room and did not appear again in the reception rooms. As soon as this became known, everyone wished to leave at once; there was complete confusion in the ante-rooms; Clelia found herself close to Fabrizio; the profound misery depicted on his features moved her to pity. “Let us forget the past,” she said to him, “and keep this reminder of friendship.” As she said these words, she held out her fan so that he might take it.

Everything changed in Fabrizio’s eyes; in an instant he was another man; the following day he announced that his retreat was at an end, and returned to occupy his magnificent apartment in the palazzo Sanseverina. The Archbishop said, and believed, that the favour which the Prince had shewn him in admitting him to his game had completely turned the head of this new saint: the Duchessa saw that he had come to terms with Clelia. This thought, coming to intensify the misery that was caused her by the memory of a fatal promise, finally decided her to absent herself for a while. People marvelled at her folly. What! Leave the court at the moment when the favour that she enjoyed appeared to have no bounds! The Conte, perfectly happy since he had seen that there was no love between Fabrizio and the Duchessa, said to his friend: “This new Prince is virtue incarnate, but I have called him that

boy: will he ever forgive me? I can see only one way of putting myself back in his good books, that is absence. I am going to shew myself a perfect model of courtesy and respect, after which I shall be ill, and shall ask leave to retire. You will allow me that, now that Fabrizio's fortune is assured. But will you make me the immense sacrifice," he added, laughing, "of exchanging the sublime title of Duchessa for another greatly inferior? For my own amusement, I am leaving everything here in an inextricable confusion; I had four or five workers in my various Ministries, I placed them all on the pension list two months ago, because they read the French newspapers; and I have filled their places with blockheads of the first order.

"After our departure, the Prince will find himself in such difficulties that, in spite of the horror that he feels for Rassi's character, I have no doubt that he will be obliged to recall him, and I myself am only awaiting an order from the tyrant who disposes of my fate to write a letter of tender friendship to my friend Rassi, and tell him that I have every reason to hope that presently justice will be done to his merits."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

This serious conversation was held on the day following Fabrizio's return to the palazzo Sanseverina; the Duchessa was still overcome by the joy that radiated from Fabrizio's every action. "So," she said to herself, "that little saint has deceived me! She has not been able to hold out against her lover for three months even."

The certainty of a happy ending had given that pusillanimous creature, the young Prince, the courage to love; he knew something of the preparations for flight that were being made at the palazzo Sanseverina; and his French valet, who had little belief in the virtue of great ladies, gave him courage with respect to the Duchessa. Ernesto V allowed himself to take a step for which he was severely reproved by the Princess and all the sensible people at court; to the populace it appeared to set the seal on the astonishing favour which the Duchessa enjoyed. The Prince went to see her in her palazzo.

"You are leaving," he said to her in a serious tone which the Duchessa thought odious; "you are leaving, you are going to play me false and violate your oath! And yet, if I had delayed ten minutes in granting you Fabrizio's pardon, he would have been dead. And you leave me in this wretched state! When but for your oath I should never have had the courage to love you as I do! Have you no sense of honour, then?"

"Think for a little, Prince. In the whole of your life has there been a period equal in happiness to the four months that have just gone by? Your glory as Sovereign, and, I venture to think, your happiness as a man, have never risen to such a pitch. This is the compact that I propose; if you deign to consent to it, I shall not be your mistress for a fleeting instant, and by virtue of an oath extorted by fear, but I shall consecrate every moment of my life to procuring your happiness, I shall be always what I have been for the last four months, and perhaps love will come to crown friendship. I would not swear to the contrary."

“Very well,” said the Prince, delighted, “take on another part, be something more still, reign at once over my heart and over my States, be my Prime Minister; I offer you such a marriage as is permitted by the regrettable conventions of my rank; we have an example close at hand: the King of Naples has recently married the Duchessa di Partana. I offer you all that I have to offer, a marriage of the same sort. I am going to add a distressing political consideration to shew you that I am no longer a mere boy, and that I have thought of everything. I lay no stress on the condition which I impose on myself of being the last Sovereign of my race, the sorrow of seeing in my lifetime the Great Powers dispose of my succession; I bless these very genuine drawbacks, since they offer me additional means of proving to you my esteem and my passion.”

The Duchessa did not hesitate for an instant; the Prince bored her, and the Conte seemed to her perfectly suitable; there was only one man in the world who could be preferred to him. Besides, she ruled the Conte, and the Prince, dominated by the exigencies of his rank, would more or less rule her. Then, too, he might become unfaithful to her, and take mistresses; the difference of age would seem, in a very few years, to give him the right to do so.

>From the first moment, the prospect of boredom had settled the whole question; however, the Duchessa, who wished to be as charming as possible, asked leave to reflect.

It would take too long to recount here the almost loving turns of speech and the infinitely graceful terms in which she managed to clothe her refusal. The Prince flew into a rage; he saw all his happiness escaping. What was to become of him when the Duchessa had left his court? Besides, what a humiliation to be refused! “And what will my French valet say when I tell him of my defeat?”’

The Duchessa knew how to calm the Prince, and to bring the discussion back gradually to her actual terms.

“If Your Highness deigns to consent not to press for the fulfilment of a fatal promise, and one that is horrible in my eyes, as making me incur my own contempt, I shall spend my life at his court, and that court will always be what it has been this winter; every moment of my time will be devoted to

contributing to his happiness as a man, and to his glory as a Sovereign. If he insists on binding me by my oath, he will be destroying the rest of my life, and will at once see me leave his States, never to return. The day on which I shall have lost my honour will be also the last day on which I shall set eyes on you."

But the Prince was obstinate, like all pusillanimous creatures; moreover his pride as a man and a Sovereign was irritated by the refusal of his hand; he thought of all the difficulties which he would have had to overcome to make this marriage be accepted, difficulties which, nevertheless, he was determined to conquer.

For the next three hours, the same arguments were repeated on either side, often interspersed with very sharp words. The Prince exclaimed:

"Do you then wish me to believe, Signora, that you are lacking in honour? If I had hesitated so long on the day when General Fabio Conti was giving Fabrizio poison, you would at present be occupied in erecting a tomb to him in one of the churches of Parma."

"Not at Parma, certainly, in this land of poisoners."

"Very well then, go, Signora Duchessa," retorted the Prince angrily, "and you will take with you my contempt."

As he was leaving, the Duchessa said to him in a whisper:

"Very well, be here at ten o'clock this evening, in the strictest incognito, and you shall have your fool's bargain. You will then have seen me for the last time, and I would have devoted my life to making you as happy as an Absolute Prince can be in this age of Jacobins. And think what your court will be when I am no longer here to extricate it by force from its innate dulness and mischief."

"For your part, you refuse the crown of Parma, and more than the crown, for you would not have been the ordinary Princess, married for political reasons and without being loved; my heart is all yours, and you would have seen yourself for ever the absolute mistress of my actions as of my government."

“Yes, but the Princess your mother would have the right to look down upon me as a vile intriguer.”

“What then; I should banish the Princess with a pension.”

There were still three quarters of an hour of cutting retorts. The Prince, who had a delicate nature, could not make up his mind either to enjoy his rights, or to let the Duchessa go. He had been told that after the first moment has been obtained, no matter how, women come back.

Driven from the house by the indignant Duchessa, he had the temerity to return, trembling all over and extremely unhappy, at three minutes to ten. At half past ten the Duchessa stepped into her carriage and started for Bologna. She wrote to the Conte as soon as she was outside the Prince’s States:

“The sacrifice has been made. Do not ask me to be merry for a month. I shall not see Fabrizio again; I await you at Bologna, and when you please I will be the Contessa Mosca. I ask you one thing only, do not ever force me to appear again in the land I am leaving, and remember always that instead of an income of 150,000 lire, you are going to have thirty or forty thousand at the very most. All tie fools have been watching you with gaping mouths, and for the future you will be respected only so long as you demean yourself to understand all their petty ideas. Tu l’as voulu, George Dandin!”

A week later their marriage was celebrated at Perugia, in a church in which the Conte’s ancestors were buried. The Prince was in despair. The Duchessa had received from him three or four couriers, and had not failed to return his letters to him, in fresh envelopes, with their seals unbroken. Ernesto V had bestowed a magnificent pension on the Conte, and had given the Grand Cordon of his order to Fabrizio.

“That is what pleased me most in his farewells. We parted,” said the Conte to the new Contessa Mosca della Rovere, “the best friends in the world; he gave me a Spanish Grand Cordon, and diamonds which are worth quite as much as the Grand Cordon. He told me that he would make me a Duca, but he wished to keep that in reserve, as a way of bringing you back to his States. And so I am charged to inform you, a fine mission for a husband, that

if you deign to return to Parma, be it only for a month, I shall be made Duca, with whatever title you may select, and you shall have a fine estate."

This the Duchessa refused with an expression of horror.

After the scene that had occurred at the ball at court, which seemed fairly decisive, Clelia seemed to retain no memory of the love which she had for a moment reciprocated; the most violent remorse had seized hold of that virtuous and Christian soul. All this Fabrizio understood quite well, and in spite of all the hopes that he sought to entertain, a sombre misery took possession similarly of his soul. This time, however, his misery did not send him into retreat, as on the occasion of Clelia's marriage.

The Conte had requested his nephew to keep him exactly informed of all that went on at court, and Fabrizio, who was beginning to realise all that he owed to him, had promised himself that he would carry out this mission faithfully.

Like everyone in the town and at court, Fabrizio had no doubt that the Conte intended to return to the Ministry, and with more power than he had ever had before. The Conte's forecasts were not long in taking effect: in less than six weeks after his departure, Rassi was Prime Minister, Fabio Conti Minister of War, and the prisons, which the Conte had nearly emptied, began to fill again. The Prince, in summoning these men to power, thought that he was avenging himself on the Duchessa; he was madly in love and above all hated Conte Mosca as a rival.

Fabrizio had plenty to do; Monsignor Landriani, now seventy-two years old, had declined into a state of great languor, and as he now hardly ever left his Palace, it fell to his Coadjutor to take his place in almost all his functions.

The Marchesa Crescenzi, crushed by remorse, and frightened by her spiritual director, had found an excellent way of withdrawing herself from Fabrizio's gaze. Taking as an excuse the last months of a first confinement, she had given herself as a prison her own palazzo; but this palazzo had an immense garden. Fabrizio managed to find a way into it, and placed on the path which Clelia most affected flowers tied up in nosegays, and arranged in such a way as to form a language, like the flowers which she had sent up to him every evening in the last days of his imprisonment in the Torre Farnese.

The Marchesa was greatly annoyed by this overture; the motions of her soul were swayed at one time by remorse, at another by passion. For several months she did not allow herself to go down once to the garden of her palazzo; she had scruples even about looking at it from the windows.

Fabrizio began to think that she was parted from him for ever, and despair began to seize hold of his soul also. The world in which he was obliged to live disgusted him unspeakably, and had he not been convinced in his heart that the Conte could not find peace of mind apart from his Ministry, he would have gone into retreat in his small apartment in the Archbishop's Palace. It would have been pleasant for him to live entirely in his thoughts and never more to hear the human voice save in the exercise of his functions.

"But," he said to himself, "in the interest of the Conte and Contessa Mosca, there is no one to take my place."

The Prince continued to treat him with a distinction which placed him in the highest rank at that court, and this favour he owed in great measure to himself. The extreme reserve which, in Fabrizio, sprang from an indifference bordering on disgust for all the affections or petty passions that fill the lives of men, had pricked the young Prince's vanity; he often remarked that Fabrizio had as much character as his aunt. The Prince's candid nature had in part perceived a truth: namely that no one approached him with the same feelings in his heart as Fabrizio. What could not escape the notice even of the common herd of courtiers was that the consideration won by Fabrizio was not that given to a mere Coadjutor, but actually exceeded the respect which the Sovereign shewed to the Archbishop. Fabrizio wrote to the Conte that if ever the Prince had enough intelligence to perceive the mess into which the Ministers, Rassi, Fabio Conti, Zurla and others of like capacity had thrown his affairs, he, Fabrizio, would be the natural channel through which he would take action without unduly compromising his self-esteem.

"But for the memory of those fatal words, that boy," he told Contessa Mosca, "applied by a man of talent to an august personage, the august personage would already have cried: 'Return at once and rid me of these rascals!' At this very moment, if the wife of the man of talent deigned to make an advance, of however little significance, the Conte would be recalled with joy: but he will return through a far nobler door, if he is willing to wait

until the fruit is ripe. Meanwhile everyone is bored to death at the Princess's drawing-rooms, they have nothing to amuse them but the absurdity of Rassi, who, now that he is a Conte, has become a maniac for nobility. Strict orders have just been issued that anyone who cannot produce eight quarterings of nobility must no longer dare to present himself at the Princess's evenings (these are the exact words of the proclamation). All the men who already possess the right to enter the great gallery in the mornings, and to remain in the Sovereign's presence when he passes on his way to mass, are to continue to enjoy that privilege; but newcomers will have to shew proof of their eight quarterings. Which has given rise to the saying that it is clear that Rassi gives no quarter." It may be imagined that such letters were not entrusted to the post. Contessa Mosca replied from Naples: "We have a concert every Thursday, and a conversazione on Sundays; there is no room to move in our rooms. The Conte is enchanted with his excavations, he devotes a thousand francs a month to them, and has just brought some labourers down from the mountains of the Abruzzi, who cost him only three and twenty soldi a day. You must really come and see us. This is the twentieth time and more, you ungrateful man, that I have given you this invitation."

Fabrizio had no thought of obeying the summons: the letter which he wrote every day to the Conte or Contessa seemed in itself an almost insupportable burden. The reader will forgive him when he learns that a whole year passed in this way, without his being able to address a single word to the Marchesa. All his attempts to establish some correspondence with her had been repulsed with horror. The habitual silence which, in his boredom with life, Fabrizio preserved everywhere, except in the exercise of his functions and at court, added to the spotless purity of his morals, made him the object of a veneration so extraordinary that he finally decided to pay heed to his aunt's advice.

"The Prince has such a veneration for you," she wrote to him, "that you must be on the look-out for disgrace; he will lavish on you signs of indifference, and the atrocious contempt of the courtiers will follow on the heels of his. These petty despots, however honest they may be, change like the fashions, and for the same reason: boredom. You will find no strength to resist the Sovereign's caprices except in preaching. You improvise so well in verse! Try to speak for half an hour on religion; you will utter heresies at first; but

hire a learned and discreet theologian to help you with your sermons, and warn you of your mistakes, you can put them right the day after."

The kind of misery which a crossed love brings to the soul has this effect, that everything which requires attention and action becomes an atrocious burden. But Fabrizio told himself that his influence with the people, if he acquired any, might one day be of use to his aunt, and also to the Conte, his veneration for whom increased daily, as his public life taught him to realise the dishonesty of mankind. He decided to preach, and his success, prepared for him by his thinness and his worn coat, was without precedent. People found in his utterances a fragrance of profound sadness, which, combined with his charming appearance and the stories of the high favour that he enjoyed at court, captivated every woman's heart. They invented the legend that he had been one of the most gallant captains in Napoleon's army. Soon this absurd rumour had passed beyond the stage of doubt. Seats were reserved in the churches in which he was to preach; the poor used to take their places there as a speculation from five o'clock in the morning.

His success was such that Fabrizio finally conceived the idea, which altered his whole nature, that, were it only from simple curiosity, the Marchesa Crescenzi might very well come one day to listen to one of his sermons. Suddenly the enraptured public became aware that his talent had increased twofold. He allowed himself, when he was moved, to use imagery the boldness of which would have made the most practised orators shudder; at times, forgetting himself completely, he gave way to moments of passionate inspiration, and his whole audience melted in tears. But it was in vain that his aggrottato eye sought among all the faces turned towards the pulpit that one face the presence of which would have been so great an event for him.

"But if ever I do have that happiness," he said to himself, "either I shall be taken ill, or I shall stop short altogether." To obviate the latter misfortune, he had composed a sort of prayer, tender and impassioned, which he always placed in the pulpit, on a footstool; his plan was to begin reading this piece, should the Marchesa's presence ever place him at a loss for a word.

He learned one day, through those of the Marchesa's servants who were in his pay, that orders had been given to prepare for the following evening the box of the casa Crescenzi at the principal theatre. It was a year since the

Marchesa had appeared at any public spectacle, and it was a tenor who was creating a furore and filling the house every evening that was making her depart from her habit. Fabrizio's first impulse was an intense joy. "At last I can look at her for a whole evening! They say she is very pale." And he sought to imagine what that charming face could be like, with its colours half obliterated by the war that had been waged in her soul.

His friend Ludovico, in consternation at what he called his master's madness, found, with great difficulty, a box on the fourth tier, almost opposite the Marchesa's. An idea suggested itself to Fabrizio; "I hope to put it into her head to come to a sermon, and I shall choose a church that is quite small, so as to be able to see her properly." As a rule, Fabrizio preached at three o'clock. On the morning of the day on which the Marchesa was to go to the theatre, he gave out that, as he would be detained all day at the Palace by professional duties, he would preach as a special exception at half past eight in the evening, in the little church of Santa Maria della Visitazione, situated precisely opposite one of the wings of the palazzo Crescenzi. Lodovico, on his behalf, presented an enormous quantity of candles to the nuns of the Visitation, with the request that they would illuminate their church during the day. He had a whole company of Grenadier Guards, a sentry was posted, with fixed bayonet, outside each chapel, to prevent pilfering.

The sermon was announced for half past eight only, and by two o'clock the church was completely filled; one may imagine the din that there was in the quiet street over which towered the noble structure of the palazzo Crescenzi. Fabrizio had published the announcement that, in honour of Our Lady of Pity, he would preach on the pity which a generous soul ought to feel for one in misfortune, even when he is guilty.

Disguised with all possible care, Fabrizio reached his box in the theatre at the moment when the doors were opened, and when there were still no lights. The performance began about eight o'clock, and a few minutes later he had that joy which no mind can conceive that has not also felt it, he saw the door of the Crescenzi box open; a little later the Marchesa appeared; he had not had so clear a view of her since the day on which she had given him her fan. Fabrizio thought that he would suffocate with joy; he was conscious of emotions so extraordinary that he said to himself: "Perhaps I am going to

die! What a charming way of ending this sad life! Perhaps I am going to collapse in this box; the faithful gathered at the Visitation will wait for me in vain, and tomorrow they will learn that their future Archbishop forgot himself in a box at the Opera, and, what is more, disguised as a servant and wearing livery! Farewell my whole reputation! And what does my reputation mean to me?"

However, about a quarter to nine, Fabrizio collected himself with an effort; he left his box on the fourth tier and had the greatest difficulty in reaching, on foot, the place where be was to doff his livery and put on a more suitable costume. It was not until nearly nine o'clock that he arrived at the Visitation, in such a state of pallor and weakness that the rumour went round the church that the Signor Coadiutore would not be able to preach that evening. One may imagine the attention that was lavished on him by the Sisters at the grille of their inner parlour, to which he had retired. These ladies talked incessantly; Fabrizio asked to be left alone for a few moments, then hastened to the pulpit. One of his assistants had informed him, about three o'clock, that the Church of the Visitation was packed to the doors, but with people of the lowest class, attracted apparently by the spectacle of the illumination. On entering the pulpit, Fabrizio was agreeably surprised to find all the chairs occupied by young men of fashion, and by people of the highest distinction.

A few words of excuse began his sermon, and were received with suppressed cries of admiration. Next came the impassioned description of the unfortunate wretch whom one must pity, to honour worthily the Madonna della Pietà, who, herself, had so greatly suffered when on earth. The orator was greatly moved; there were moments when he could barely pronounce his words so as to be heard in every part of this small church. In the eyes of all the women, and of a good many of the men, he had himself the air of the wretch whom one ought to pity, so extreme was his pallor. A few minutes after the words of apology with which he had begun his discourse, it was noticed that he was not in his normal state; it was felt that his melancholy, this evening, was more profound and more tender than usual. Once he was seen to have tears in his eyes; in a moment there rose through the congregation a general sob, so loud that the sermon was completely interrupted.

This first interruption was followed by a dozen others; his listeners uttered cries of admiration, there were outbursts of tears; one heard at every moment such exclamations as: “Ah! Santa Madonna!” “Ah! Gran Dio!” The emotion was so general and so irrepressible in this select public, that no one was ashamed of uttering these cries, and the people who were carried away by them did not seem to their neighbours to be in the least absurd.

During the rest which it is customary to take in the middle of the sermon, Fabrizio was informed that there was absolutely no one left in the theatre; one lady only was still to be seen in her box, the Marchesa Crescenzi. During this brief interval, a great clamour was suddenly heard proceeding from the church; it was the faithful who were voting a statue to the Signor Coadiutore. His success in the second part of the discourse was so wild and worldly, the bursts of Christian contrition gave place so completely to cries of admiration that were altogether profane, that he felt it his duty to address, on leaving the pulpit, a sort of reprimand to his hearers. Whereupon they all left at once with a movement that was singularly formal; and, on reaching the street, all began to applaud with frenzy, and to shout: “Evviva del Dongo!”

Fabrizio hastily consulted his watch, and ran to a little barred window which lighted the narrow passage from the organ gallery to the interior of the convent. Out of politeness to the unprecedented and incredible crowd which filled the street, the porter of the palazzo Crescenzi had placed a dozen torches in those iron sconces which one sees projecting from the outer walls of palazzi built in the middle ages. After some minutes, and long before the shouting had ceased, the event for which Fabrizio was waiting with such anxiety occurred, the Marchesa’s carriage, returning from the theatre, appeared in the street; the coachman was obliged to stop, and it was only at a crawling pace, and by dint of shouts, that the carriage was able to reach the door.

The Marchesa had been touched by the sublime music, as is the way with sorrowing hearts, but far more by the complete solitude in which she sat, when she learned the reason for it. In the middle of the second act, and while the tenor was on the stage, even the people in the pit had suddenly abandoned their seats to go and tempt fortune by trying to force their way into the Church of the Visitation. The Marchesa, finding herself stopped by

the crowd outside her door, burst into tears. “I had not made a bad choice,” she said to herself.

But precisely on account of this momentary weakening, she firmly resisted the pressure put upon her by the Marchese and the friends of the family, who could not conceive her not going to see so astonishing a preacher.

“Really,” they said, “he beats even the best tenor in Italy!” “If I see him, I am lost!” the Marchesa said to herself.

It was in vain that Fabrizio, whose talent seemed more brilliant every day, preached several times more in the same little church, opposite the palazzo Crescenzi, never did he catch sight of Clelia, who indeed took offence finally at this affection of coming to disturb her quiet street, after he had already driven her from her own garden.

In letting his eye run over the faces of the women who listened to him, Fabrizio had noticed some time back a little face of dark complexion, very pretty, and with eyes that darted fire. As a rule these magnificent eyes were drowned in tears at the ninth or tenth sentence in the sermon. When Fabrizio was obliged to say things at some length, which were tedious to himself, he would very readily let his eyes rest on that head, the youthfulness of which pleased him. He learned that this young person was called Annetta Marini, the only daughter and heiress of the richest cloth merchant in Parma, who had died a few months before.

Presently the name of this Annetta Marini, the cloth merchant’s daughter, was on every tongue; she had fallen desperately in love with Fabrizio. When the famous sermons began, her marriage had been arranged with Giacomo Rassi, eldest son of the Minister of Justice, who was by no means unattractive to her; but she had barely listened twice to Monsignor Fabrizio before she declared that she no longer wished to marry; and, since she was asked the reason for so singular a change of mind, she replied that it was not fitting for an honourable girl to marry one man when she had fallen madly in love with another. Her family sought to discover, at first without success, who this other might be.

But the burning tears which Annetta shed at the sermon put them on the way to the truth; her mother and uncles having asked her if she loved Monsignor Fabrizio, she replied boldly that, since the truth had been discovered, she would not demean herself with a lie; she added that, having no hope of marrying the man whom she adored, she wished at least no longer to have her eyes offended by the ridiculous figure of Contino Rassi. This speech in ridicule of the son of a man who was pursued by the envy of the entire middle class became in a couple of days the talk of the whole town. Annetta Marini's reply was thought charming, and everyone repeated it. People spoke of it at' the palazzo Crescenzi as everywhere else.

Clelia took good care not to open her mouth on such a topic in her own drawing-room; but she plied her maid with questions, and, the following Sunday, after hearing mass in the chapel of her palazzo, bade her maid come with her in her carriage and went in search of a second mass at Signora Marini's parish church. She found assembled there all the gallants of the town, drawn by the same attraction; these gentlemen were standing by the door. Presently, from the great stir which they made, the Marchesa gathered that this Signorina Marini was entering the church; she found herself excellently placed to see her, and, for all her piety, paid little attention to the mass, Clelia found in this middle class beauty a little air of decision which, to her mind, would have suited, if anyone, a woman who had been married for a good many years. Otherwise, she was admirably built on her small scale, and her eyes, as they say in Lombardy, seemed to make conversation with the things at which she looked. The Marchesa escaped before the end of mass.

The following day the friends of the Crescenzi household, who came regularly to spend the evening there, related a fresh absurdity on the part of Annetta Marini. Since her mother, afraid of her doing something foolish, left only a little money at her disposal, Annetta had gone and offered a magnificent diamond ring, a gift from her father, to the famous Hayez, then at Parma decorating the drawing-rooms of the palazzo Crescenzi, and had asked him to paint the portrait of Signor del Dongo; but she wished that in this portrait he should simply be dressed in black, and not in the priestly habit. Well, the previous evening, Annetta's mother had been greatly surprised, and even more shocked to find in her daughter's room a

magnificent portrait of Fabrizio del Dongo, set in the finest frame that had been gilded in Parma in the last twenty years.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Carried away by the train of events, we have not had time to sketch the comic race of courtiers who swarm at the court of Parma and who made fatuous comments on the incidents which we have related. What in that country makes a small noble, adorned with an income of three or four thousand lire, worthy to figure in black stockings at the Prince's levees, is, first and foremost, that he shall never have read Voltaire and Rousseau: this condition it is not very difficult to fulfil. He must then know how to speak with emotion of the Sovereign's cold, or of the latest case of mineralogical specimens that has come to him from Saxony. If, after this, you were not absent from mass for a single day in the year, if you could include in the number of your intimate friends two or three prominent monks, the Prince deigned to address a few words to you once every year, a fortnight before or a fortnight after the first of January, which brought you great relief in your parish, and the tax collector dared not press you unduly if you were in arrears with the annual sum of one hundred francs with which your small estate was burdened.

Signor Gonzo was a poor devil of this sort, very noble, who, apart from possessing some little fortune of his own, had obtained, through the Marchese Crescenzi's influence, a magnificent post which brought him in eleven hundred and fifty francs annually. This man might have dined at home; but he had one passion: he was never at his ease and happy except when he found himself in the drawing-room of some great personage who said to him from time to time: "Hold your tongue, Gonzo, you're a perfect fool." This judgment was prompted by ill temper, for Gonzo had almost always more intelligence than the great personage. He would discuss anything, and quite gracefully, besides, he was ready to change his opinion on a grimace from the master of the house. To tell the truth, although of a profound subtlety in securing his own interests, he had not an idea in his head, and, when the Prince had not a cold, was sometimes embarrassed as he came into a drawing-room.

What had, in Parma, won Gonzo a reputation was a magnificent cocked hat, adorned with a slightly dilapidated black plume, which he wore even with evening dress; but you ought to have seen the way in which he carried this plume, whether upon his head or in his hand; there were talent and importance combined. He inquired with genuine anxiety after the health of the Marchesa's little dog, and, if the palazzo Crescenzi had caught fire, he would have risked his life to save one of those fine armchairs in gold brocade, which for so many years had caught in his black silk breeches, whenever it so happened that he ventured to sit down for a moment.

Seven or eight persons of this species appeared every evening at seven o'clock in the Marchesa Crescenzi's drawing-room. No sooner had they sat down than a lackey, magnificently attired in a daffodil-yellow livery, covered all over with silver braid, as was the red waistcoat which completed his magnificence, came to take the poor devils' hats and canes. He was immediately followed by a footman carrying an infinitesimal cup of coffee, supported on a stem of silver filigree; and every half hour a butler, wearing a sword and a magnificent coat, in the French style, brought round ices.

Half an hour after the threadbare little courtiers, one saw arrive five or six officers, talking in loud voices and with a very military air, and usually discussing the number of buttons which ought to be on the soldiers' uniform in order that the Commander in Chief might gain victories. It would not have been prudent to quote a French newspaper in this drawing-room; for, even when the news itself was of the most agreeable kind, as for instance that fifty Liberals had been shot in Spain, the speaker none the less remained convicted of having read a French newspaper. The crowning effort of all these people's skill was to obtain every ten years an increase of 150 francs in their pensions. It is thus that the Prince shares with his nobility the pleasure of reigning over all the peasants and burgesses of the land.

The principal personage, beyond all question, of the Crescenzi drawing-room, was the Cavaliere Foscarini, an entirely honest man; in consequence of which he had been in prison off and on, under every government. He had been a member of that famous Chamber of Deputies which, at Milan, rejected the Registration Law presented to them by Napoleon, an action of very rare occurrence in history. Cavaliere Foscarini, after having been for twenty years a friend of the Marchesers mother, had remained the influential

man in the household. He had always some amusing story to tell, but nothing escaped his shrewd perception; and the young Marchesa, who felt herself guilty at heart, trembled before him.

As Gonzo had a regular passion for the great gentleman, who said rude things to him and moved him to tears once or twice every year, his mania was to seek to do him trifling services; and, if he had not been paralysed by the habits of an extreme poverty, he might sometimes have succeeded, for he was not lacking in a certain ingredient of shrewdness, and a far greater effrontery.

Gonzo, as we have seen him, felt some contempt for the Marchesa Crescenzi, for never in her life had she addressed a word to him that was not quite civil; but after all she was the wife of the famous Marchese Crescenzi, Cavaliere d'onore to the Princess, who, once or twice in a month, used to say to Gonzo: "Hold your tongue, Gonzo, you're a perfect fool." Gonzo observed that everything which was said about little Annetta Marmi made the Marchesa emerge for a moment from the state of dreamy indifference in which as a rule she remained plunged until the clock struck eleven; then she made tea, and offered a cup to each of the men present, addressing him by name. After which, at the moment of her withdrawing to her room, she seemed to find a momentary gaiety, and this was the time chosen for repeating to her satirical sonnets.

They compose such sonnets admirably in Italy: it is the one kind of literature that has still a little vitality; as a matter of fact, it is not subjected to the censor, and the courtiers of the casa Crescenzi invariably prefaced their sonnets with these words: "Will the Signora Marchesa permit one to repeat to her a very bad sonnet?" And when the sonnet had been greeted with laughter and had been repeated several times, one of the officers would not fail to exclaim: "The Minister of Police ought to see about giving a bit of hanging to the authors of such atrocities." Middle class society, on the other hand, welcomes these sonnets with the most open admiration, and the lawyers' clerks sell copies of them.

>From the sort of curiosity shown by the Marchesa, Gonzo imagined that too much had been said in front of her of the beauty of the little Marini, who moreover had a fortune of a million, and that the other woman was jealous

of her. As, with his incessant smile and his complete effrontery towards all that was not noble, Gonzo found his way everywhere, on the very next day he arrived in the Marchesa's drawing-room, carrying his plumed hat in a triumphant fashion which was to be seen perhaps only once or twice in the year, when the Prince had said to him: "Addio, Gonzo."

After respectfully greeting the Marchesa, Gonzo did not withdraw as usual to take his seat on the chair which had just been pushed forward for him. He took his stand in the middle of the circle and exclaimed bluntly: "I have seen the portrait of Monsignor del Dongo." Clelia was so surprised that she was obliged to lean upon the arm of her chair; she tried to face the storm, but presently was obliged to leave the room.

"You must agree, my poor Gonzo, that your tactlessness is unique," came arrogantly from one of the officers, who was finishing his fourth ice. "Don't you know that the Coadjutor, who was one of the most gallant Colonels in Napoleon's army, played a trick that ought to have hanged him on the Marchesa's father, when he walked out of the citadel where General Fabio Conti was in command, as he might have walked out of the Steccata?" (The Steccata is the principal church in Parma.)

"Indeed I am ignorant of many things, my dear Captain, and I am a poor imbecile who makes blunders all day long."

This reply, quite to the Italian taste, caused a laugh at the expense of the brilliant officer. The Marchesa soon returned; she had armed herself with courage, and was not without hope of being able herself to admire this portrait, which was said to be excellent. She spoke with praise of the talent of Hayez, who had painted it. Unconsciously she addressed charming smiles at Gonzo, who looked malevolently at the officer. As all the other courtiers of the house indulged in the same pastime, the officer took flight, not without vowing a deadly hatred against Gonzo; the latter was triumphant, and later in the evening, when he took his leave, was invited to dine next day.

"I can tell you something more," cried Gonzo, the following evening, after dinner, when the servants had left the room: "the latest thing is that our Coadjutor has fallen in love with the little Marini!"

One may judge of the agitation that arose in Clelia's heart on hearing so extraordinary an announcement. The Marchese himself was moved.

"But, Gonzo my friend, you are off the track, as usual! And you ought to speak with a little more caution of a person who has had the honour to sit down eleven times at his Highness's whist-table."

"Well, Signor Marchese," replied Gonzo with the coarseness of people of his sort, "I can promise you that he would just as soon sit down to the little Marini. But it is enough that these details displease you; they no longer exist for me, who desire above all things not to shock my beloved Marchese."

Regularly, after dinner, the Marchese used to retire to take a siesta. He let the time pass that day; but Gonzo would sooner have cut out his tongue than have said another word about the little Marini; and, every moment, he began a speech, so planned that the Marchese might hope that he was about to return to the subject of the little lady's love affairs. Gonzo had in a superior degree that Italian quality of mind which consists in exquisitely delaying the launching of the word for which one's hearer longs. The poor Marchese, dying of curiosity, was obliged to make advances; he told Gonzo that, when he had the pleasure of dining with him, he ate twice as much as usual. Gonzo did not take the hint, he began to describe a magnificent collection of pictures which the Marchesa Balbi, the late Prince's mistress, was forming; three or four times he spoke of Hayez, in a slow and measured tone full of the most profound admiration. The Marchese said to himself: "Now he is coming to the portrait which the little Marini ordered!" But this was what Gonzo took good care not to do. Five o'clock struck, which put the Marchese in the worst of tempers, for he was in the habit of getting into his carriage at half past five, after his siesta, to drive to the Corso.

'This is what you do with your stupid talk!" he said rudely to Gonzo: "you are making me reach the Corso after the Princess, whose Cavaliere d'onore I am, when she may have orders to give me. Come along! Hurry up! Tell me in a few words, if you can, what is this so-called love affair of the Coadjutor?"

But Gonzo wished to keep this anecdote for the Marchesa, who had invited him to dine; he did hurry up, in a very few words, the story demanded of

him, and the Marchese, half asleep, ran off to take his siesta. Gonzo adopted a wholly different manner with the poor Marchesa. She had remained so young and natural in spite of her high position, that she felt it her duty to make amends for the rudeness with which the Marchese had just spoken to Gonzo. Charmed by this success, her guest recovered all his eloquence, and made it a pleasure, no less than a duty, to enter into endless details with her.

Little Annetta Marini gave as much as a sequin for each place that was kept for her for the sermons; she always arrived with two of her aunts and her father's old cashier. These places, which were reserved for her overnight, were generally chosen almost opposite the pulpit, but slightly in the direction of the high altar, for she had noticed that the Coadjutor often turned towards the altar. Now, what the public also had noticed was that, not infrequently, those speaking eyes of the young preacher rested with evident pleasure on the young heiress, that striking beauty; and apparently with some attention, for, when he had his eyes fixed on her, his sermon became learned; the quotations began to abound in it, there was no more sign of that eloquence which springs from the heart; and the ladies, whose interest ceased almost at once, began to look at the Marini and to find fault with her.

Clelia made him repeat to her three times over all these singular details. At the third repetition she became lost in meditation; she was calculating that just fourteen months had passed since she last saw Fabrizio. "Would it be very wrong," she asked herself, "to spend an hour in a church, not to see Fabrizio but to hear a famous preacher? Besides, I shall take a seat a long way from the pulpit, and I shall look at Fabrizio only once as I go in and once more at the end of the sermon. . . . No," Clelia said to herself, "it is not Fabrizio I am going to see, I am going to hear the astounding preacher!" In the midst of all these reasonings, the Marchesa felt some remorse; her conduct had been so exemplary for fourteen months! "Well," she said to herself, in order to secure some peace of mind, "if the first woman to arrive this evening has been to hear Monsignor del Dongo, I shall go too; if she has not been, I shall stay away."

Having come to this decision, the Marchesa made Gonzo happy by saying to him:

“Try to find out on what day the Coadjutor will be preaching, and in what church. This evening, before you go, I shall perhaps have a commission to give you.”

No sooner had Gonzo set off for the Corso than Clelia went to take the air in the garden of her palazzo. She did not consider the objection that for ten months she had not set foot in it. She was lively, animated; she had a colour. That evening, as each boring visitor entered the room, her heart throbbed with emotion. At length they announced Gonzo, who at the first glance saw that he was going to be the indispensable person for the next week; “The Marchesa is jealous of the little Marini, and, upon my word, it would be a fine drama to put on the stage,” he said to himself, “with the Marchesa playing the leading lady, little Annetta the juvenile, and Monsignor del Dongo the lover! Upon my word, the seats would not be too dear at two francs.” He was beside himself with joy, and throughout the evening cut everybody short, and told the most ridiculous stories (that, for example, of the famous actress and the Marquis de Pequigny, which he had heard the day before from a French visitor). The Marchesa, for her part, could not stay in one place; she moved about the drawing-room, she passed into a gallery adjoining it into which the Marchese had admitted no picture that had not cost more than twenty thousand francs. These pictures spoke in so clear a language that evening that they wore out the Marchesa’s heart with the force of her emotion. At last she heard the double doors open, she ran to the drawing-room: it was the Marchesa Raversi! But, on making her the customary polite speeches, Clelia felt that her voice was failing her. The Marchesa made her repeat twice the question: “What do you think of the fashionable preacher?” which she had not heard at first.

“I did regard him as a little intriguer, a most worthy nephew of the illustrious Contessa Mosca, but the last time he preached; why, it was at the Church of the Visitation, opposite you, he was so sublime, that I could not hate him any longer, and I regard him as the most eloquent man I have ever heard.”

“So you have been to hear his sermons?” said Clelia, trembling with happiness.

“Why,” the Marchesa laughed, “haven’t you been listening? I wouldn’t miss one for anything in the world. They say that his lungs are affected, and that

soon he will have to give up preaching."

No sooner had the Marchesa left than Clelia called Gonzo to the gallery.

"I have almost decided," she told him, "to hear this preacher who is so highly praised. When does he preach?"

"Next Monday, that is to say in three days from now; and one would say that he had guessed Your Excellency's intention, for he is coming to preach in the Church of the Visitation."

There was more to be settled; but Clelia could no longer muster enough voice to speak: she took five or six turns of the gallery without adding a word. Gonzo said to himself: "There is vengeance at work. How can anyone have the insolence to escape from a prison, especially when he is guarded by a hero like General Fabio Conti?

"However, you must make haste," he added with delicate irony; "his lungs are affected. I heard Doctor Rambo say that he has not a year to live; God is punishing him for having broken his bond by treacherously escaping from the citadel."

The Marchesa sat down on the divan in the gallery, and made a sign to Gonzo to follow her example. After some moments of silence she handed him a little purse in which she had a few sequins ready. "Reserve four places for me."

"Will it be permitted for poor Gonzo to slip in, in Your Excellency's train?"

"Certainly. Reserve five places. . . . I do not in the least mind," she added, "whether I am near the pulpit; but I should like to see Signorina Marini, who they say is so pretty."

The Marchesa could not live through the three days that separated her from the famous Monday, the day of the sermon. Gonzo, inasmuch as it was a signal honour to be seen in the company of so great a lady, had put on his French coat with his sword; this was not all, taking advantage of the proximity of the palazzo, he had had carried into the church a magnificent gilt armchair for the Marchesa, which was thought the last word in insolence

by the middle classes. One may imagine how the poor Marchesa felt when she saw this armchair, which had been placed directly opposite the pulpit. Clelia was in such confusion, with downcast eyes, shrinking into a corner of the huge chair, that she had not even the courage to look at the little Marini, whom Gonzo pointed out to her with his hand with an effrontery which amazed her. Everyone not of noble birth was absolutely nothing in the eyes of this courtier.

Fabrizio appeared in the pulpit; he was so thin, so pale, so consumed, that Clelia's eyes immediately filled with tears. Fabrizio uttered a few words, then stopped, as though his voice had suddenly failed; he tried in vain to begin various sentences; he turned round and took up a sheet of paper:

"Brethren," he said, "an unhappy soul and one well worthy of all your pity requests you, through my lips, to pray for the ending of his torments, which will cease only with his life."

Fabrizio read the rest of his paper very slowly; but the expression of his voice was such that before he was halfway through the prayer, everyone was weeping, even Gonzo. "At any rate, I shall not be noticed," thought the Marchesa, bursting into tears.

While he was reading from the paper, Fabrizio found two or three ideas concerning the state of the unhappy man for whom he had come to beg the prayers of the faithful. Presently thoughts came to him in abundance. While he appeared to be addressing the public, he spoke only to the Marchesa. He ended his discourse a little sooner than was usual, because, in spite of his efforts to control them, his tears got the better of him to such a point that he was no longer able to pronounce his words in an intelligible manner. The good judges found this sermon strange but quite equal, in pathos at least, to the famous sermon preached with the lighted candles. As for Clelia, no sooner had she heard the first ten lines of the prayer read by Fabrizio than it seemed to her an atrocious crime to have been able to spend fourteen months without seeing him. On her return home she took to her bed, to be able to think of Fabrizio with perfect freedom; and next morning, at an early hour, Fabrizio received a note couched in the following terms:

“We rely upon your honour; find four bravi, of whose discretion you can be sure, and tomorrow, when midnight sounds from the Steccata, be by a little door which bears the number 19, in the Strada San Paolo. Remember that you may be attacked, do not come alone.”

On recognising that heavenly script, Fabrizio fell on his knees and burst into tears. “At last,” he cried, “after fourteen months and eight days! Farewell to preaching.”

It would take too long to describe all the varieties of folly to which the hearts of Fabrizio and Clelia were a prey that day. The little door indicated in the note was none other than that of the orangery of the palazzo Crescenzi, and ten times in the day Fabrizio found an excuse to visit it. He armed himself, and alone, shortly before midnight, with a rapid step, was passing by the door when, to his inexpressible joy, he heard a well-known voice say in a very low Whisper:

“Come in here, friend of my heart.”

Fabrizio entered cautiously and found himself actually in the orangery, but opposite a window heavily barred which stood three or four feet above the ground. The darkness was intense. Fabrizio had heard a slight sound in this window, and was exploring the bars with his hand, when he felt another hand, slipped through the bars, take hold of his and carry it to a pah” of lips which gave it a kiss.

“It is I,” said a dear voice, “who have come here to tell you that I love you, and to ask you if you are willing to obey me.”

One may imagine the answer, the joy, the astonishment of Fabrizio; after the first transports, Clelia said to him:

“I have made a vow to the Madonna, as you know, never to see you; that is why I receive you in this profound darkness. I wish you to understand clearly that, should you ever force me to look at you in the daylight, all would be over between us. But first of all, I do not wish you to preach before Annetta Marini, and do not go and think that it was I who was so foolish as to have an armchair carried into the House of God.”

“My dear angel, I shall never preach again before anyone; I have been preaching only in the hope that one day I might see you.”

“Do not speak like that, remember that it is not permitted to me to see you.”

Here we shall ask leave to pass over, without saying a single word about them, an interval of three years.

At the time when our story is resumed, Conte Mosca had long since returned to Parma, as Prime Minister, and was more powerful than ever.

After three years of divine happiness, Fabrizio’s heart underwent a caprice of affection which led to a complete change in his circumstances. The Marchesa had a charming little boy two years old, Sandrine, who was his mother’s joy; he was always with her or on the knees of the Marchese Crescenzi; Fabrizio, on the other hand, hardly ever saw him; he did not wish him to become accustomed to loving another father. He formed the plan of taking the child away before his memories should have grown distinct.

In the long hours of each day when the Marchesa could not see her lover, Sandrino’s company consoled her; for we have to confess a thing which will seem strange north of the Alps; in spite of her errors she had remained true to her vow; she had promised the Madonna, as the reader may perhaps remember, never to see Fabrizio; these had been her exact words; consequently she received him only at night, and there was never any light in the room.

But every evening he was received by his mistress; and, what is worthy of admiration, in the midst of a court devoured by curiosity and envy, Fabrizio’s precautions had been so ably calculated that this amicizia, as it is called in Lombardy, had never even been suspected. Their love was too intense for quarrels not to occur; Clelia was extremely given to jealousy, but almost always their quarrels sprang from another cause. Fabrizio had made use of some public ceremony in order to be in the same place as the Marchesa and to look at her; she then seized a pretext to escape quickly, and for a long time afterwards banished her lover.

Amazement was felt at the court of Parma that no intrigue should be known of a woman so remarkable both for her beauty and for the loftiness of her mind; she gave rise to passions which inspired many foolish actions, and often Fabrizio too was jealous.

The good Archbishop Landriani had long been dead; the piety, the exemplary morals, the eloquence of Fabrizio had made him be forgotten; his own elder brother was dead and all the wealth of his family had come to him. From this time onwards he distributed annually among the vicars and curates of his diocese the hundred odd thousand francs which the Archbishopric of Parma brought him in.

It would be difficult to imagine a life more honoured, more honourable or more useful than Fabrizio had made for himself, when everything was upset by this unfortunate caprice of paternal affection.

“According to the vow which I respect and which nevertheless is the bane of my life, since you refuse to see me during the day,” he said once to Clelia, “I am obliged to live perpetually alone, with no other distraction than my work; and besides I have not enough work. In the course of this stern and sad way of passing the long hours of each day, an idea has occurred to me, which is now torturing me, and against which I have been striving in vain for six months: my son will not love me at all; he never hears my name mentioned. Brought up amid all the pleasing luxury of the palazzo Crescenzi, he barely knows me. On the rare occasions when I do see him, I think of his mother, whose heavenly beauty he recalls to me, and whom I may not see, and he must find me a serious person, which, with children, means sad.”

“Well,” said the Marchesa, “to what is all this speech leading? It frightens me.”

“To my having my son; I wish him to live with me; I wish to see him every day; I wish him to grow accustomed to loving me; I wish to love him myself at my leisure. Since a fatality without counterpart in the world decrees that I must be deprived of that happiness which so many other tender hearts enjoy, and forbids me to pass my life with all that I adore, I wish at least to have beside me a creature who recalls you to my heart, who to some extent takes your place. Men and affairs are a burden to me in my enforced solitude; you

know that ambition has always been a vain word to me, since the moment when I had the good fortune to be locked up by Barbone; and anything that is not felt in my heart seems to me fatuous in the melancholy which in your absence overwhelms me."

One can imagine the keen anguish with which her lover's grief filled the heart of poor Clelia; her sorrow was all the more intense, as she felt that Fabrizio had some justification. She went the length of wondering whether she ought not to try to obtain a release from her vow. Then she would receive Fabrizio during the day like any other person in society, and her reputation for sagacity was too well established for any scandal to arise. She told herself that by spending enough money she could procure a dispensation from her vow; but she felt also that this purely worldly arrangement would not set her conscience at rest, and that an angry heaven might perhaps punish her for this fresh crime.

On the other hand, if she consented to yield to so natural a desire on the part of Fabrizio, if she sought not to hurt that tender heart which she knew so well, and whose tranquillity her singular vow so strangely jeopardised, what chance was there of abducting the only son of one of the greatest nobles in Italy without the fraud's being discovered? The Marchese Crescenzi would spend enormous sums, would himself conduct the investigations, and sooner or later the facts of the abduction would become known. There was only one way of meeting this danger, the child must be sent abroad, to Edinburgh, for instance, or to Paris; but this was a course to which the mother's affection could never consent. The other plan proposed by Fabrizio, which was indeed the more reasonable of the two, had something sinister about it, and was almost more alarming still in the eyes of this despairing mother; she must, said Fabrizio, feign an illness for the child; he would grow steadily worse, until finally he died in the Marchese Crescenzi's absence.

A repugnance which, in Clelia, amounted to terror, caused a rupture that could not last.

Clelia insisted that they must not tempt God; that this beloved son was the fruit of a crime, and that if they provoked the divine anger further, God would not fail to call him back to Himself. Fabrizio spoke again of his strange destiny: "The station to which chance has called me," he said to

Clelia, “and my love oblige me to dwell in an eternal solitude, I cannot, like the majority of my brethren, taste the pleasures of an intimate society, since you will receive me only in the darkness, which reduces to a few moments, so to speak, the part of my life which I may spend with you.”

Tears flowed in abundance. Clelia fell ill; but she loved Fabrizio too well to maintain her opposition to the terrible sacrifice that he demanded of her. Apparently, Sandrino fell ill; the Marchese sent in haste for the most celebrated doctors, and Clelia at once encountered a terrible difficulty which she had not foreseen: she must prevent this adored child from taking any of the remedies ordered by the doctors; it was no small matter.

The child, kept in bed longer than was good for his health, became really ill. How was one to explain to the doctors the cause of his malady? Torn asunder by two conflicting interests both so dear to her, Clelia was within an ace of losing her reason. Must she consent to an apparent recovery, and so sacrifice all the results of that long and painful make-believe? Fabrizio, for his part, could neither forgive himself the violence he was doing to the heart of his mistress nor abandon his project. He had found a way of being admitted every night to the sick child’s room, which had led to another complication. The Marchesa came to attend to her son, and sometimes Fabrizio was obliged to see her by candle-light, which seemed to the poor sick heart of Clelia a horrible sin and one that foreboded the death of Sandrino. In vain had the most famous casuists, consulted as to the necessity of adherence to a vow in a case where its performance would obviously do harm, replied that the vow could not be regarded as broken in a criminal fashion, so long as the person bound by a promise to God failed to keep that promise not for a vain pleasure of the senses but so as not to cause an obvious evil. The Marchesa was none the less in despair, and Fabrizio could see the time coming when his strange idea was going to bring about the death of Clelia and that of his son.

He had recourse to his intimate friend, Conte Mosca, who, for all the old Minister that he was, was moved by this tale of love of which to a great extent he had been ignorant.

“I can procure for you the Marchese’s absence for five or six days at least: when do you require it?”

A little later, Fabrizio came to inform the Conte that everything was in readiness now for them to take advantage of the Marchese's absence.

Two days after this, as the Marchese was riding home from one of his estates in the neighbourhood of Mantua, a party of brigands, evidently hired to execute some personal vengeance, carried him off, without maltreating him in any way, and placed him in a boat which took three days to travel down the Po, making the same journey that Fabrizio had made long ago, after the famous affair with Giletti. On the fourth day, the brigands marooned the Marchese on a desert island in the Po, taking care first to rob him completely, and to leave him no money or other object that had the slightest value. It was two whole days before the Marchese managed to reach his palazzo in Parma; he found it draped in black and all his household in mourning.

This abduction, very skilfully carried out, had a deplorable consequence: Sandrino, secretly installed in a large and fine house where the Marchesa came to see him almost every day, died after a few months. Clelia imagined herself to have been visited with a just punishment, for having been unfaithful to her vow to the Madonna: she had seen Fabrizio so often by candle-light, and indeed twice in broad daylight and with such rapturous affection, during Sandrino's illness. She survived by a few months only this beloved son, but had the joy of dying in the arms of her lover.

Fabrizio was too much in love and too religious to have recourse to suicide; he hoped to meet Clelia again in a better world, but he had too much intelligence not to feel that he had first to atone for many faults.

A few days after Clelia's death, he signed several settlements by which he assured a pension of one thousand francs to each of his servants, and reserved a similar pension for himself; he gave landed property, of an annual value of 100,000 lire or thereabouts, to Contessa Mosca; a similar estate to the Marchesa del Dongo, his mother, and such residue as there might be of the paternal fortune to one of his sisters who was poorly married. On the following day, having forwarded to the proper authorities his resignation of his Archbishopric and of all the posts which the favour of Ernesto V and the Prime Minister's friendship had successively heaped upon him, he retired to

the Charterhouse of Parma, situated in the woods adjoining the Po, two leagues from Sacca.

Contessa Mosca had strongly approved, at the time, her husband's return to office, but she herself would never on any account consent to cross the frontier of the States of Ernesto V. She held her court at Vignano, a quarter of a league from Casalmaggiore, on the left bank of the Po, and consequently in the Austrian States. In this magnificent palace of Vignano, which the Conte had built for her, she entertained every Thursday all the high society of Parma, and every day her own many friends. Fabrizio had never missed a day in going to Vignano. The Contessa, in a word, combined all the outward appearances of happiness, but she lived for a very short tune only after Fabrizio, whom she adored, and who spent but one year in his Charterhouse.

The prisons of Parma were empty, the Conte immensely rich, Ernesto V adored by his subjects, who compared his rule to that of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany.

TO THE HAPPY FEW

APPENDIX

This translation of La Chartreuse de Parme has been made from the reprint in two volumes of the first edition (Paris, Les éditions G. Grès et Cie. MCMXXII), with reference also to the stereotyped edition published by MM. Calmami Levy and to the reprint issued by M. Flammarion in his series, Les meilleurs auteurs classiques (1921). I am also indebted to the extremely literal version by Signora Maria Ortiz (Biblioteca Sansoniana Straniera — La Certosa di Parma — G. C. Sansoni, Firenze, 1922), which has thrown a ray of light on several dark passages.

The Chartreuse was written in (and not a distance of three hundred leagues from) Paris, and in the short interval between November 4, 1838, and December 26 of that year. So much the author reveals in a note, which I do not translate: “The Char, made 4 novembre 1838 — 26 décembre id. The 3 septembre 1838, I had the idea of the Char. I begined it after a tour in Britanny, I suppose, or to the Havre. I begined the 4 nov. till the 26 décembre. The 26 dec. I send the 6 énormes cahiers to Kol for les faire voir to the bookseller.” His object in pretending to have written the book in 1830 may have been to establish a prescriptive immunity from any charge of traducing the government of Louis–Philippe; if so, it is by a characteristic slip that he speaks of having written it towards the end of 1830.

Kol., otherwise Romain Colomb, Beyle’s executor, relates in the Notice Biographique prefixed to Armance that in January, 1839, while the Chartreuse was going through the press, a cahier of sixty pages of the manuscript was mislaid. Unable to find it among the mass of papers that littered his room, Beyle rewrote the sixty pages, and the new version was already in type when he told Colomb of his loss. Colomb at once searched for and found the missing cahier, whereupon Beyle, “stupefied by the ease of my discovery, dreading, in a sense, the sight of this manuscript, would not even glance over it, much less compare it with the pages that had taken its place.”

It was published in March, 1839. In the same year, Beyle began to correct, reduce and amplify the whole work, before he was moved by Balzac's criticism to condense the first fifty-four pages into four or five. Three copies thus annotated are in existence, one of which has been reproduced in facsimile in an extremely limited edition: (Paris, Edouard Champion, 3 vols. 1921 — 100 copies only.) In 1904 M. Casimir Stryienski reprinted in the first volume of Les Soirées du Stendhal Club (Mercure de France) the two fragments of which a translation follows. The first is intended for inclusion in Chapter V, in the brief account of Fabrizio's convalescence at Amiens. Colonel Le Baron, the wounded officer whom he met and left at the White Horse Inn at the end of Chapter IV, is now re-introduced as returning to his family at Amiens, and a story is told them which supersedes the account of General Pietranera's death in Chapter II. The second fragment is a small expansion of the already over-long Chapter VI.

Visitors to Parma will look in vain for most of the architectural monuments which met the gaze of Fabrizio. The Torre Farnese has never existed, though it may have been suggested, as to mass, by the huge fragment of the Palazzo Farnese at Piacenza, as well as by the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, and as to origin, by the story of Parisina and Ugo d'Esté, told in English by Gibbon and Byron. In appearance, it would have been not unlike the tower, also damaged by an earthquake, which stands in the background of Mantegna's fresco of the Martyrdom of Saint James, in the Church of the Eremitani at Padua. The problem of how a road running out of Parma to the south could lead directly to Sacca and the Po is as insoluble as that of the guarded permission given to Fabrizio in 1815 to read the novels of Walter Scott.

The Steccata of course exists, and the Church of San Giovanni, but the latter is singularly bare of monumental tombs. There is even a Charterhouse, at San Lazzaro Parmense, though it has escaped the attention of Baedeker. There were Farnese, but the last of them died, of the pleasures of the table, in 1731; a portrait of him in his corpulence may be seen by the curious in the Reale Galleria in the Piletta — another large Farnese Palace also unfinished. There is indeed a Cathedral, but there is no Archbishop, and the Bishop's Palace is an untidy piece of patched-up antiquity.

It is probable that Beyle was led to place the scene of his story at Parma, which, in Rome, Naples et Florence, he had dismissed, not unjustly, as ville

d'ailleurs assez plate, precisely because there was not, in 1838, any reigning dynasty in that State. The Duchy of Parma was held and admirably governed by Marie–Louise, the wife and widow of Napoleon, from 1815 until after Beyle's death in 1843, when she was still in the prime of life, being by some years his junior. Suddenly, in 1847, she died. The Bourbon dynasty, which had been transplanted to the brief Kingdom of Etruria, and in 1814 had been placated with the Republic of Lucca as a temporary Duchy (which Charles II had finally sold, a few months earlier, to its legal heir, the Grand Duke of Tuscany), returned, and rapidly converted Stendhal's fiction into historical fact. Charles II was almost at once obliged to abdicate. His son, Charles III, proceeded to emulate the career of Ranuccio–Ernesto IV until, in 1854, he met a similar fate. His widow, a daughter of the Duc de Berri, then acted as Regent for her son Robert I, until in 1859 the Risorgimento swept them for ever from their Duchy. Duke Robert died in 1907, the father of twenty children, one of whom, Prince Sixte de Bourbon–Parme, shewed in the late war some reflexion of the spirit of Fabrizio del Dongo, as the curious English reader may find in my translation of his L'Autriche et la paix séparée (Austria's Peace Offer, London, Constable and Co., Ltd., 1921). Another is the Empress Zita, while a third has re-established the Bourbon dynasty in Northern Europe by becoming the father of the Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

Francesco Hayez, the Milanese painter immortalised by his decoration of the palazzo Crescenzi and by his portrait of Fabrizio del Dongo, died at a great age in 1882, having out-lived the date appointed by Beyle for his own immortality.

C. K. S. M.

FRAGMENT I. BIRAGUE'S NARRATIVE

Fabrizio, well received in this house which seemed to him very pleasant, sought never to speak of the battle, since memories of that sort depressed the Colonel; but as he thought without ceasing of the details of which he had been a witness, he would sometimes return to the topic; then the Colonel placed a finger on his lips with a smile, and spoke of something else. On the other hand, Fabrizio was careful never to say anything that might let it be guessed by what succession of chances he had been brought into the neighbourhood of Waterloo. The ladies especially were constantly placing him under the necessity of finding polite answers which should tell them nothing of what they desired to know. At every moment, by phrases which betrayed the keenest interest, they placed him under the necessity of telling them something; but he got well out of the trap and the ladies knew absolutely nothing, except that he was called Vasi, and even then they had good reason to believe that this name was assumed.

Colonel Le Baron, his wife and the ladies of their acquaintance were therefore devoured by curiosity, this young man's adventures must indeed be extraordinary.

"All that I can say positively," repeated the Colonel, "is that he is endowed with the truest courage, the most simple, the most innocent, so to speak. When I was so stupid as to set him on picket at the head of the bridge of La Sainte, and he fought there, one against ten, I would wager that he was drawing a sabre for the first time."

"And his passport which you went to verify at the municipality is really made out: Vasi, dealer in barometers, travelling with his wares?" . . .

The ladies, that day, plied him with a thousand artful questions about the barometers, he extricated himself with a laugh and very neatly; they consulted him as to the state of the barometer in the house, which they put in his hands, he remembered the tone that, in similar circumstances, Conte Pietranera would have adopted, and, justified by the fun that was being made

of him, replied in a tone of the most lively gallantry. His appearance was so modest and his tone was in so strange a contrast to his ordinary manner that it was by no means ill received, the ladies went into fits of laughter. That same evening the Colonel said to them:

“Chance has just offered me a way of finding out our young man’s position; you know that resurrected-looking creature who has come to him from Italy, the man is a lawyer and is called Birague, but besides that he is dying of fright; he speaks bad French, but I hope that his gibberish may not offend you, for he is so driven by fear that each of his sentences says something. This morning, this lawyer who, for some days, has always followed me with his eye at the café, has at last found an excuse for, as he says, presenting his respects to me; I at once thought that perhaps you would deign not to be put off by his speech, which for that matter greatly resembles your young favourite’s; and so I have invited this strange creature to take tea with us this evening, and, if you give me leave, I shall now send Beloir to fetch him from the café.”

Ten minutes later, Trooper Beloir announced at the door of the drawing-room: “M. Birague, avocat.”

The conversation lasted for fully two hours, the ladies heaped every attention on the poor lawyer, who did everything in his power to please them, but it was in vain that they sought to extract from him anything that bore upon Fabrizio; they had lost patience with his discretion, which was not lacking in polite forms of speech, when the Colonel exclaimed:

“I must say, my dear avocat, that you are a very brave man, how could you dare enter France in the present state of things? They are kind enough to give me in the army a certain reputation for bravery, but I must confess to you that in your place, and (I tell you frankly) speaking a French so different from that spoken by the natives of the country, I should never have ventured to penetrate into so disturbed a country. Now I see that you have made a conquest of these ladies, you have an air of sincerity which pleases me and I should like to give you my protection. Madame’s uncle is Mayor of Amiens; I ought to tell you that, since you are not recommended by an Ambassador, your fate lies in his hands. M. le Maire Leborgne has a savage nature, he will never believe that you have come to Amiens for your health,” and so forth.

The ladies were quick in taking the hint given them by the Colonel; they took the utmost pains to give the Milanese lawyer a strong impression of the cruel nature of the worthy M. Leborgne, Mayor of Amiens. Birague turned paler than his shirt, than the white cravat and enormous hat in which he had attired himself that evening to be presented to ladies; but he found himself so well treated that finally about eleven o'clock he ventured to ask the Colonel if he had any horses. The Colonel asked him whether, at that time of night, he wished to go for a ride, saying that he had only two horses, which indeed were a pair of screws, but that he placed them willingly at his service.

"I should not think of going out by the gate at this hour, and running the risk of seeing myself questioned by the police, but I find so estimable a humanity in your heart and in the hearts of these good ladies that I venture to make a request of you; allow me to spend the night in your horses' hayloft: as it is an idea that has just occurred to me, the terrible Mayor Leborgne would never hear of it and I should spend one night at least in peace and quiet. I am lodging with His Excellency, M. Vasi, but he has committed the imprudence, as a matter of fact long before my arrival, of refusing to see any more of the Duprez family, who are greatly annoyed and who, I have no doubt, would be glad to have their revenge. I have not attempted to hide my feelings in the matter from M. Vasi, I have taken the liberty of saying that this step was rash on his part; but your experience, Monsieur le Colonel, must have taught you what the rashness of youth is. M. Vasi's answer was that he would have been stifled by boredom if he had continued to spend his evenings with the Duprez family.

"In the present state of things, the Duprez, who, no doubt, desire to be avenged, will not dare to attack a man like M. Vasi, but they will take it out of a poor devil like myself," and so on.

The Colonel ended by giving M. Birague a letter of recommendation addressed to the Mayor of Amiens, in which he declared that he would answer with his life for M. Birague, a respectable lawyer of Milan, whom he had known when he was stationed in that city.

"Carry this letter on you while you are on your way to the Grand Monarque, and burn all the written or printed documents which you may have in your room; spend a quiet night, but you see that I am answering for you, come

tomorrow and tell me your whole history so that, if the Mayor questions me closely, I can make a show of having known you for a long time; say nothing to M. Vasi of what I am doing for you."

One may imagine whether this evening was amusing for the ladies, but they were afraid of having alarmed M. Birague unduly.

"Really, the man's appearance was incredible," said Mme. Le Baron.

"But," put in one of her friends, "it becomes more and more likely that our young protégé Vasi is a man of consequence in his own country."

The Colonel had to employ stratagems for a week; M. Birague spoke as freely as could be desired of his own affairs, but was impenetrable on everything that related to Fabrizio. Mme. Le Baron and her friends invited him to luncheon one day when the Colonel was absent and played so cruelly upon M. Birague's alarm that he ended by saying to them with tears:

"Oh, well, I see that you are good ladies, I see that you would not wish to ruin me, you have immense influence with the Mayor of Amiens, give me your word that you will obtain for me a passport for England signed by the Mayor and I shall at least be able to fly to London in case of danger; my father ordered me to travel by London so as to be able to return to Milan without fear of Barone Binder, the Chief of Police there; he is a man of the same sort as your Mayor, it is not easy to get out of his prisons, once one has got into them."

"Very well," exclaimed Mme. Le Baron, "if you are frank with us, I give you my word that tomorrow you shall have your passport for London; we wish no harm to M. Vasi, far from it, this lady," she pointed to the youngest of her friends, "has a tender regard for him."

Birague was slightly astonished by the shout of laughter which greeted this admission; he had some difficulty in replying with any clarity to the hundred questions by which he was at once overwhelmed.

The ladies knew already that Vasi was an assumed name, that Fabrizio del Dongo was the second son of the Marchese del Dongo, Second Grand Majordomo Major of the Lombardo–Venetian Kingdom, one of the greatest

noblemen in that country, to whom his, Birague's father, was steward. On the news of Napoleon's landing from the Gulf of Oranti, in June, regardless of the alarm of his aunt and mother, Fabrizio had fled from his father's magnificent castle, situated at Grianta, on the Lake of Como, six leagues from the Swiss frontier.

Birague was at this stage in his narrative when the Colonel returned; he was told all that Birague had already said; as his regiment had been stationed for some time at Lodi, a few leagues from Milan, he knew all the principal personages of the court of Prince Eugène.

"What," he cried, "that Contessa Gina Pietranera, of whom you are speaking to these ladies as the aunt of Fabrizio, is she that famous Contessa Pietranera, the most beautiful woman in Milan in the days of the Viceroy, whose word was law at his court?"

"The very same, Colonel."

"And what age might she be now?"

"Twenty-seven or twenty-eight; she is more beautiful than ever, but she is completely ruined, her husband was murdered in what they called a duel, and the Contessa was furious at not being able to avenge his death: the General was out shooting in the mountains of Bergamo with some officers of the Ultra Party; he, as you know, although belonging to a family of the old nobility, had always served with the troops of the Cisalpine Republic; there was a luncheon in the course of this shooting party, one of the Ultra officers took the liberty of belittling the courage of the Cisalpine troops; the General struck him a blow, the luncheon was interrupted; as they had no weapons but guns, they fought with those, the poor General fell clone dead, with two bullets in his body; but the details of this duel made such a stir in Milan that all the officers who had been present were obliged to go and travel in Switzerland. The local surgeon who examined the General's body certified that the bullet which caused his death had entered from the back. This statement by the surgeon came to the Signor Barone Binder, Director General of the Police, Contessa Pietranera knew of it at once, for she can do anything she likes at Milan; all the important people of the place are her friends and are at her service. Twenty-four hours later, there arrived a second

statement by the country surgeon from the Bergamo district; it contradicted the first and stated that the bullet which caused the death had entered by the stomach and that the second bullet which had passed through the thigh had also entered from in front; but they said that this surgeon had received a large sum of money. On the very night after the arrival of this second statement, the officers who had been present at the duel left for Switzerland; the funeral was held next day; they were afraid of being mobbed by the crowd, and the strangest thing of all was that the surgeon also left for Switzerland, where he still is. He has never dared to shew his face again in his own neighbourhood; the Bergamasks have sworn to exterminate him; and they don't take things lightly in that part of the world. It was after that that there Was the famous quarrel between Signora Pietranera and her friend Limercati."

"What, is that the famous Limercati who, in 1811, had such fine English horses, seven of them?"

"No doubt, Lodovico Limercati; he had forty horses in his stables, he has an income of over two hundred thousand lire; my cousin Èrcole is his factor; but there's a bad relation for you, he has never thought of employing me as lawyer to the rich Limercati estate."

"It is terrible, frightful," cried Mme. Le Baron, "but you spoke of a letter which, I must tell you, excites my curiosity greatly."

FRAGMENT II. CONTE ZORAFI, THE PRINCE'S "PRESS"

Conte Zurla, the Minister of the Interior, brought to Signora Sanseverina's Conte Zorafi, who was the Press of Parma.

At the gatherings at which he appeared, that silence, which is often painful at official gatherings, could not find a place, and, in a country which has a terrible police and a State Prison the tower of which, one hundred and eighty feet high, may be seen at the end of every street, all gatherings of more than two persons may be considered official.

One thing that may be said in praise of Zorafi is that he was no more of a spy than any other gentleman at court; in fact, at heart he was ridiculous, but not at all wicked. No other gentleman at court could, without risk to his friends, have seen the Sovereign daily. Zorafi fancied himself a Minister, and was afraid of Conte Mosca. At the same time he was obliged, ten times in a month perhaps, to speak evil of him. When the Conte had scored a marked success in any affair, he was certain to be blamed, the day after, by the Prince's Press.

Conte Zorafi was a man of spirit who could not bear to have fifty napoleons in his desk. As soon as he saw that sum, or indeed a much less considerable sum in his possession, he would think of spending it. For instance, on the day on which we shall do him the honour of presenting him to the reader, he will have just bought for forty-five napoleons a magnificent English lustre. The purchase made, not knowing where to place it and already caring less about it, he has asked Prinote, the famous jeweller, to keep it in his shop.

This Conte had spent his youth in composing sonnets in an emphatic style over which the people of Lombardy had gone so mad as to compare them to the sonnets of Monti. Now, in some connexion or other, someone had ventured to say in public that this style, which was so emphatic, was emphatic with the simple character of Napoleon; it had required only this comment to make Zorafi's sonnets fall into disrepute.

And, a surprising thing, Zorafi, whose character was precisely that of a conceited child, had not shewn the slightest annoyance. Besides what was more serious than the decline of his sonnets, he had an income of barely nine or ten thousand lire and spent twenty-five. In spite of these 25,000 lire he frequently had debts, and

these debts were paid every year by an unseen hand.

What then was Zorafi? He was the Prince's Press.

He was a Conte, as everyone is in Italy, but besides that he had enjoyed the greatest literary renown for ten years. Zorafi was not at all wicked, or at least had only the ill temper of a child. He had the purest Sienese accent. The sentences flowed from his lips with a perfect facility, he spoke of everything with charm, in a word nothing would have been lacking if from time to time he could have found some idea to place in his sentences.

A little time since, the Prince had given Zorafi a carriage, but this was on condition of his paying at least twenty-five visits daily.

"It does not suit me at present to have a newspaper printed," the Prince had said to him in making him a present of the carriage, with horses attached, and a coachman and groom to boot. "A newspaper conducted by a man of your sort would have a crowd of subscribers; very well, have a crowd of friends and tell them, with the spirit for which you are distinguished, the articles that you would print, if you had the privilege of the newspaper. One day, you shall have this newspaper, and it will bring you in an income of 50,000 lire. For I shall give you plenty of liberty, you will speak of the measures adopted by my Government."

Once they had observed this mania in Zorafi, people listened to him in society, as in another place they read the Journal Officiel.

The Shorter Fiction

The childhood home in Claix, near Genoble, South-Eastern France, where Stendhal spent "the happiest years of his life". His closest friend was his younger sister, Pauline, with whom he maintained a steady correspondence.

The village of Claix today

VITTORIA ACCORAMBONI

DUCHESS OF BRACCIANO

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

Unfortunately for myself as for the reader, this is not a work of fiction, but the faithful translation of a most serious narrative written at Padua in December, 1585.

Some years ago I happened to be in Mantua; I was in search of sketches and small pictures in keeping with my small income, but I wanted only the work of painters earlier than the year 1600; about that date originality in Italian art, already greatly imperilled by the seizure of Florence in 1530, finally perished.

Instead of pictures, an aged patrician of great wealth and great avarice offered to sell me, at an extremely high price, some old manuscripts yellow with age; I asked leave to look through them; he consented, adding that he trusted to my honesty, that I would retain no memory of such spicy anecdotes as I might find, if I did not purchase his manuscripts.

On these terms, which appealed to me, I perused, to the great detriment of my eyesight, three or four hundred volumes in which had been jumbled together, two or three centuries ago, accounts of tragic adventures, letters challenging people to duels, treaties of peace between neighbouring nobles, memoranda upon every sort of subject, etc., etc. The venerable owner asked an enormous price for his manuscripts. After duly bargaining with him I

acquired for a considerable sum the right to have copies made of certain stories which appealed to me and which illustrate Italian customs in the sixteenth century. I have twenty-two folio volumes of them, and it is one of these stories, faithfully translated, which the reader will find in the following pages, provided that he is endowed with patience. I know the history of the sixteenth century in Italy, and am of opinion that what follows is perfectly true. I have taken pains to arrange that the translation of that old Italian style, grave, direct, supremely obscure, and loaded with allusions to the things and ideas that occupied the world under the Pontificate of Sixtus V (in 1585) should shew no traces of the fine literature of today, or of the ideas of our unprejudiced age.

The unknown author of the manuscript is a circumspect person, he never judges any action, never leads up to it; his sole business is to relate things truthfully. If now and then he is unconsciously picturesque, that is because, in 1585, vanity did not enwrap a man's every action in a halo of affectation; he felt that he could exert an influence over his neighbour only by expressing himself with the utmost possible clarity. In the year 1585, with the exception of the fools kept at courts, or of poets, no one dreamed of making himself pleasant in speech. People had not yet learned to say: "I will die at Your Majesty's feet," when they had just sent out for post horses with which to fly the country; this was perhaps the one form of treachery that was not in use. People spoke little, and everyone paid the most careful attention to what was said to him.

And so, gracious reader, look not here for a quick and savoury style, sparkling with up to date allusions to the latest fashions in feelings, do not, above all, expect the captivating emotions of a novel by George Sand; that great writer would have made a masterpiece of the life and misfortunes of Vittoria Accoramboni. The sincere account which I present to you can claim only the most modest advantages of history. When it so happens that, travelling post, alone, as night is falling, your thoughts turn to the great art of knowing the human heart, you may take as a basis for your conclusions the story told in the following pages. The author says everything, explains everything, leaves nothing to the reader's imagination; he wrote twelve days after the death of the heroine. [Footnote: The Italian manuscript is deposited at the office of the Revue des Deux Mondes.]

Vittoria Accoramboni was born of an extremely noble family, in a small town in the Duchy of Urbino, named Agubio. From her childhood, she was everywhere singled out, on account of her rare and extraordinary beauty; but this beauty was the least of her charms: nothing was lacking of those qualities which make one admire a girl of exalted birth; but nothing else was so remarkable in her, or as one might say nothing seemed so miraculous, amid so many extraordinary qualities, as a certain altogether charming grace which, at the first glance, won her the hearts and allegiance of all beholders. And this simplicity which gave authority to her slightest word was troubled by no suspicion of artifice; from the first one felt confidence in a lady endowed with such extraordinary beauty. One might, with a superhuman effort, have resisted this enchantment, had one merely seen her; but, if one heard her speak, if especially one was privileged to hold any conversation with her, it was quite impossible to escape so extraordinary a charm.

Many young gentlemen of the city of Rome, where her father lived, and where one still sees his palazzo in the Piazza Rusticucci, near Saint Peter's, sought to win her hand. There was much jealousy, and indeed rivalry, but in the end Vittoria's parents chose Felice Peretti, nephew of Cardinal Montalto, now Pope Sixtus V, whom God preserve.

Felice, the son of Camilla Peretti, the Cardinal's sister, was originally named Francesco Mignucci; he took the names of Felice Peretti when he was formally adopted by his uncle.

Vittoria, on entering the Peretti family, took with her, unawares, that superiority which may be called fatal, and which accompanied her everywhere; so that one might say that, in order not to adore her, one must never have set eyes on her. [Footnote: One sees at Milan, if I remember rightly, in the Ambrosian Library, sonnets full of grace and feeling, and other pieces of poetry, the work of Vittoria Accoramboni. Sonnets of no little merit were composed at the time upon her strange fate. It appears that her intelligence was equal to her beauty and her charm.]

The love that her husband felt for her was akin to madness; her mother-inlaw, Camilla, and Cardinal Montalto himself, seemed to have no other occupation in the world than that of guessing Vittoria's wishes, so as to seek at once to gratify them. All Rome marvelled to see how this Cardinal, the

modest limits of whose fortune were as well known as his horror of all forms of luxury, found so unfailing a source of pleasure in anticipating Vittoria's every wish. Young, brilliantly beautiful, adored by all, she could not help having, at times, some extremely costly fancies. Vittoria received from her new relatives jewels of the greatest price, pearls, in short all the rarest treasures of the goldsmiths of Rome, who at that time were very well supplied.

For love of this charming niece, Cardinal Montalto, so famous for his severity, treated Vittoria's brothers as though they had been his own nephews. Ottavio Accoram-boni, as soon as he had completed his thirtieth year, was, on the representation of Cardinal Montalto, nominated by the Duke of Urbino and created, by Pope Gregory XIII, Bishop of Fossombrone; Marcello Accoramboni, a young man of fiery courage, accused of a number of crimes, and zealously pursued by the corte, [Footnote: This was the armed body responsible for the public safety, the police and detective force of the year 1580. They were commanded by a captain styled Bargello, who was personally responsible for the execution of the orders issued by Monsignore the Governor of Rome (the Chief of Police).] had with great difficulty escaped more than one prosecution which might have cost him his life. Honoured with the Cardinal's protection, he was able to recapture some sort of tranquillity.

A third brother of Vittoria, Giulio Accoramboni, was admitted by Cardinal Alessandro Sforza to the highest honours at his court, as soon as Cardinal Montalto had proffered the request.

In a word, if men know how to measure their happiness, not by the boundless insatiability of their desires, but by the real enjoyment of the advantages which they already possess, Vittoria's marriage to the nephew of Cardinal Montalto might have seemed to the Accoramboni the acme of human happiness. But the insensate desire for vast and uncertain advantages is capable of plunging the men most richly blessed with fortune's favours into strange and perilous channels of thought.

And very true it is that if any of Vittoria's relatives, as was widely suspected in Rome, helped, in his desire for an ampler fortune, to rid her of her husband, he very soon afterwards had occasion to realize how much wiser it

would have been to content himself with the moderate benefits of a pleasant fortune, and one that was so soon to rise to the very summit of what human ambition can desire.

While Vittoria was living thus like a queen in her own house, one evening when Felice Peretti had just retired to bed with his wife, a letter was handed to him by a certain Caterina, a native of Bologna and Vittoria's waiting woman. This letter had been brought by a brother of Caterina, Domenico Acquaviva, surnarned il Mancino (the left-handed). This man had been banished from Rome for various crimes; but, at Caterina's request, Felice had procured for him the powerful protection of his uncle the Cardinal, and the Mancino frequently came to the house, Felice placing great confidence in him.

The letter in question purported to be written by Mar-cello Accoramboni, of all Vittoria's brothers the one that her husband loved most dearly. He lived as a rule in hiding, out at Rome; at times, however, he took the risk of entering the city, and then found a place of refuge in Felice's house.

In the letter delivered at this unusual hour, Marcello appealed for help to his brother-inlaw Felice Peretti; he implored him to come to his assistance, adding that, for an affair of the most urgent importance, he was waiting for him by the Montecavallo palace.

Felice informed his wife of the contents of the strange letter that had been brought to him, then put on his clothes, taking no weapon but his sword. Accompanied by a single servant who carried a lighted torch, he was about to leave the house when he found his way barred by his mother Camilla, and all the women of the house, including Vittoria herself; they all besought him, most urgently, not to leave the house at that late hour. As he did not give ear to their prayers, they fell on their knees, and, with tears in their eyes, implored him to listen.

These women, and Camilla especially, had been struck with terror by the accounts of the strange occurrences that were reported every day, and remained unpunished during the Pontificate of Gregory XIII, a time of incessant trouble and unparalleled violence. They were further struck by this consideration: Marcello Accoramboni, when he ventured to make his way

into Rome, was not in the habit of sending for Felice, and such an action, at that time of night, seemed to them quite out of the question.

Filled with all the fire of his age, Felice paid no heed to these grounds for alarm; but, when he learned that the letter had been brought by the Mancino, a man to whom he was greatly attached and had been of service, nothing could stop him, and he stepped out of the house.

He was preceded, as has been said, by a single servant carrying a lighted torch; but the unfortunate young man had scarcely begun to ascend the Montecavallo when he fell, shot by three arquebuses. His assailants, seeing him on the ground, flung themselves upon him, and stabbed him again and again with daggers, until he appeared to be quite dead. Immediately the fatal tidings were conveyed to Felice's mother and wife, and through them reached the ears of the Cardinal his uncle.

The Cardinal, without moving a feature, without betraying the slightest emotion, promptly called for his clothes, dressed himself, and then commended himself to God, as also that poor soul (taken thus unawares). He next went to his niece, and, with admirable gravity and an air of profound peace, succeeded in restraining the womanly cries and lamentations which were beginning to ring through the house. His authority over the women was so effective that from that moment, and even when the body was being carried out of the house, nothing was to be seen or heard that in the least degree exceeded what occurs in the best regulated families on the occasion of the most natural deaths. As for Cardinal Montalto himself, no one could discover in him the signs, even in a modified form, of the most ordinary grief; nothing was altered in the order and outward show of his existence. Of this Rome was speedily convinced, after observing with her customary curiosity the slightest movements of a man whose feelings had been so profoundly outraged.

It so happened that on the day after Felice's death the Consistory, or Court of Cardinals, was summoned to meet at the Vatican. There was not a man in the city who did not suppose that on this first day, at least, Cardinal Montalto would excuse himself from this public function. For there he would have to meet the gaze of so many and such curious spectators. The slightest movements would be observed of that natural weakness which it is always

so desirable to conceal when from an eminent position one aspires to another more eminent still; for everyone will agree that it is not fitting that he whose ambition it is to exalt himself above the rest of mankind should shew himself to be human like the rest.

But the persons who held these ideas were doubly mistaken, for in the first place, following his custom, Cardinal Montalto was among the first to appear in the Hall of the Consistory, and secondly it was impossible for the most discerning to discover in him any sign whatsoever of human sensibility. On the contrary, by the replies which he made to those of his fellow Cardinals who, in view of so painful an event, sought to offer him words of consolation, he succeeded in filling everyone with amazement. The constancy and apparent immobility of his nature under the shock of so fearful a tragedy at once became the talk of the town.

True it is that at this same Consistory certain persons, more conversant with the arts of the courtier, ascribed this apparent insensibility not to a want of feeling but to a wealth of dissimulation; and this point of view was shortly afterwards adopted by the mass of courtiers, for it was evidently to his advantage not to shew himself too deeply injured by an outrage the author of which was doubtless highly placed and might perhaps, later on, be able to bar the way to the supreme dignity.

Whatever might be the cause of this evident and complete insensibility, one thing certain is that it affected the whole of Rome and the court of Gregory XIII with a sort of stupor. But, to return to the Consistory, when, all the Cardinals being assembled, the Pope himself entered the hall, he at once turned his eyes towards Cardinal Montalto, and tears were seen on His Holiness's cheeks; as for the Cardinal, his features shewed no sign of departure from their normal immobility.

The astonishment waxed twofold when, during this same Consistory, Cardinal Montalto having gone up in his turn to kneel before the throne of His Holiness, and to render an account to him of the matters under his charge, the Pope, before allowing him to begin, was unable to restrain his own tears. When His Holiness was at length able to speak, he sought to console the Cardinal by promising him that prompt and stern justice would be done upon the authors of so appalling an outrage. But the Cardinal, after

most humbly thanking His Holiness, begged him not to order any inquiry into what had occurred, protesting that, for his own part, he willingly forgave the author of the crime, whoever he might be. And immediately after this petition, expressed in the fewest possible words, the Cardinal passed to a detailed account of the business for which he was responsible, as though nothing out of the common had occurred.

The eyes of all the Cardinals present at the Consistory were fastened upon the Pope and upon Montalto; and although it is certainly most difficult to deceive the practised eye of a courtier, yet none of them dared say that Cardinal Montalto's face had betrayed the slightest emotion on witnessing, at such close quarters, the grief of His Holiness, who, tell the truth, was almost out of his mind. This amazing insensibility on the part of Cardinal Montalto never relaxed during the whole of the time occupied by his duty with His Holiness. Indeed, the Pope himself was impressed by this, and, the Consistory at an end, could not help remarking to the Cardinal of San Sisto, his favourite nephew:

"Veramente, costui è un gran frate!" (Truly, this fellow is a thorough friar!) [Footnote: An allusion to the hypocrisy which their critics suppose to be frequent among friars. Sixtus V had been a mendicant friar, and persecuted in his order. See his Life, by Gregorio Leti, an amusing historian, and no more mendacious than any other. Felice Peretti was murdered in 1580; his uncle was created Pope in 1585.]

Cardinal Montalto's mode of behaviour differed in no respect during the period that followed. As is the custom, he received the visits of condolence of the Cardinals, Prelates and Princes of Rome, and with none of these, whatever their existing relations, did he allow himself to give utterance to a single word of grief or lamentation. With all of them, after a brief commentary on the instability of human affairs, confirmed and fortified by sentences and texts taken from the Holy Scriptures or from the Fathers, he promptly changed the subject, and began to speak of the news of the town or of the private affairs of the person who was conversing with him, exactly as though he had wished to comfort his comforters.

Rome was particularly curious to know what would happen during the visit that would have to be paid him by Prince Paolo Giordano Orsini, Duke of

Bracciano, to whom common report ascribed the death of Felice Peretti. The general opinion was that Cardinal Montalto would not be able to remain face to face with the Prince, and engaged in private conversation with him, without allowing some indication of his true feelings to appear.

At the moment when the Prince arrived at the Cardinal's, the crowd in the street and round the door was enormous; a vast number of courtiers filled every room in the house, so great was the curiosity to study the two men's faces. But on neither one nor the other could any of the observers distinguish anything out of the common. Cardinal Montalto conformed to everything that the rules of behaviour at court prescribed; he imparted to his face a most remarkable air of hilarity, and his tone in addressing the Prince was full of affability.

Immediately afterwards, as he stepped into his coach, Prince Paolo, finding himself alone with his intimate courtiers, could not help saying with a laugh: "In fatto, è vero che costui è un gran frate!" (Indeed, it is true, the fellow is a thorough friar!) as though he had wished to confirm the truth of the words let fall by the Pope a few days earlier.

Wise men have thought that the conduct observed in these circumstances by Cardinal Montalto paved the way for him to the throne; for many people formed the opinion of him that, whether by nature or from virtue he could not or would not do harm to anyone, even when he had every reason to be angry.

Felice Peretti had left nothing in writing with regard to his wife; consequently, she was obliged to return to her own home. Cardinal Montalto handed over to her, before her departure, the clothes, jewels, and, generally speaking, all the gifts that she had received while the wife of his nephew.

On the third day after the death of Felice Peretti, Vittoria, accompanied by her mother, went to live in the palazzo of Prince Orsini. Some said that these ladies were led to adopt this course by anxiety as to their personal safety, as they appeared to be threatened by the corte [Footnote: The corte dared not venture into a Prince's palazzo.] with a charge of having consented to the homicide that had been committed, or of having at least had cognisance of it beforehand; others thought (and what occurred later on seemed to confirm

this view) that they were led to adopt this course in order to bring about the marriage, the Prince having promised Vittoria that he would marry her as soon as she should be no longer tied to a husband.

Anyhow, neither then nor later was it ever definitely known who had been responsible for the death of Felice, although everyone had his suspicions of someone else. Most people, however, set the murder down to Prince Orsini; it was generally admitted that he had a passion for Vittoria, he had shewn signs of this which could not be mistaken; and the marriage that followed was a strong proof, for the bride was so inferior in station that only the tyranny of amorous passion could raise her to a plane of matrimonial equality. [Footnote: Prince Orsini's first wife, by whom he had a son named Virginio, was a sister of Francesco I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and of the Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici. He put her to death, with the consent of her brothers, because she had had a love affair. Such were the laws of honour conveyed to Italy by the Spaniards. The unhallowed loves of a woman were as grave an offence to her brothers as to her husband.]

The common herd were by no means discouraged in this attitude by a letter addressed to the Governor of Rome which was made public a few days after the crime. This letter purported to have been written by Cesare Palantieri, a young man of a fiery spirit who had been banished from the city.

In this letter, Palantieri said that it was unnecessary for His Most Illustrious Worship to give himself the trouble of seeking elsewhere for the author of the death of Felice Peretti, since he himself had procured his assassination in consequence of certain differences which had arisen between them some time earlier.

Many people thought that the murder had not been committed without the consent of the Accoramboni family; they accused Vittoria's brothers, who were supposed to have been led astray by the desire for an alliance with so powerful and wealthy a prince. Marcello in particular was accused, on the strength of the letter which had made the unfortunate Felice leave his house. Harsh things were said of Vittoria herself, when people saw that she consented to go and live in the palazzo Orsini as a future bride, so soon after the death of her husband. It was highly improbable, they suggested, that two people would come like that, in the twinkling of an eye, to a hand-to-hand

encounter, if they had not, for some time at least, been engaged with weapons of longer range. [Footnote: An allusion to the custom of fighting with a sword and a dagger.]

The inquiry into the murder was conducted by Mon-signor Portici, Governor of Rome, by order of Gregory XIII. All that one gathers from it is that Domenico, sur-named Mancino, arrested by the corte, confesses, without being put to the question (tormentato), in his second examination, dated February 24th, 1582:

“That Vittoria’s mother was responsible for everything, and that she was assisted by the maid from Bologna, who, immediately after the murder, took refuge in the citadel of Bracciano” (which belonged to Prince Orsini, and into which the corte would not dare to penetrate), “and that the instruments of the crime were Macchione of Gubbio and Paolo Barca of Bracciano, lancie spezzate” (soldiers) “of a gentleman whose name, for fit and proper reasons, has been omitted.”

To these fit and proper reasons were added, I imagine, the entreaties of Cardinal Montalto, who persistently begged that the inquiry should be carried no farther, and indeed there was no more talk of a prosecution. The Mancino was released from prison with the precetto (order) to return at once to his own home, on pain of death, and never to leave it again without express permission. The enlargement of this man occurred in the year 1583, on the feast of Saint Louis, and as that day was also Cardinal Montalto’s birthday, the coincidence confirms my belief that it was at his request that the matter was thus brought to an end. Under so weak a government as that of Gregory XIII, a prosecution of that sort was liable to have the most disagreeable consequences without any compensating advantage.

The activities of the corte were thus suspended, but Pope Gregory XIII still declined to give his consent to the marriage of Prince Paolo Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, to the widow Accoramboni. His Holiness, having sentenced the lady to a sort of imprisonment, gave her and the Prince a precetto not to make any contract of marriage with one another without express permission from himself or his successors.

In due course Gregory XIII died (early in 1585), and the legal experts consulted by Prince Paolo Orsini having given the opinion that the precetto was annulled by the demise of the sovereign who had imposed it, the Prince decided to marry Vittoria before the new Pope should be elected. But the marriage could not be celebrated so soon as the Prince wished, partly because he was anxious to have the consent of Vittoria's brothers, and it so happened that Ottavio Accoramboni, Bishop of Fossombrone, refused absolutely to give his consent, and partly because it was not expected that the election of a successor to Gregory XIII would be so soon completed. In fact the marriage was solemnised only on the day on which the Papacy was conferred upon Cardinal Montalto, the person so deeply interested in this affair, that is to say on the 24th of April, 1585, this coincidence being either accidental on the Prince's part, or deliberate, he being glad of an opportunity to shew that he was no more afraid of the corte under the new Pope than he had been under Gregory XIII.

This marriage caused a profound shock to Sixtus V (for such was the name selected by Cardinal Montalto); he had already discarded the outlook upon life appropriate to a friar, and had raised his mind to the level of the exalted rank in which God had now placed him.

The Pope, however, shewed no sign of anger; only, Prince Orsini, having called upon him that same day with the rest of the Roman nobility to kiss his foot, and with the secret intention of trying to read, on the Holy Father's face, what he had to expect or to fear from a man hitherto so little known, discovered that it was no laughing matter. The new Pope having gazed at the Prince in a singular fashion, and not uttered a single word in reply to the compliments which he addressed to him, the Prince made up his mind to find out without more ado what were His Holiness's intentions with regard to himself.

Through the channel of Ferdinand, Cardinal de' Medici (the brother of his first wife), and of the Spanish Catholic–Ambassador, he begged and obtained of the Pope an audience in his private chamber: there he delivered to His Holiness a studied speech, and, without making any reference to the past, congratulated him on his new dignity, and offered him as a most faithful vassal and servant all his possessions and all his forces.

The Pope [Footnote: Sixtus V, elected Pope in 1585 at the age of sixty-eight, reigned for five years and four months: there is a striking similarity between him and Napoleon.] heard him with unusual seriousness, and finally replied that no one was more anxious than himself that the life and actions of Paolo Giordano Orsini should for the future be worthy of the Orsini blood and of a true Christian knight; that as for what he had been in the past in his relations with the Holy See and with the Pope's own person, no one could say more to him than his own conscience; that nevertheless he, the Prince, might be assured of one thing, namely, that just as he, the Pope, willingly forgave him anything that he might have done against Felice Peretti and against Felice Cardinal Montalto, he would never forgive him what in future he might do against Pope Sixtus; consequently he ordered him to proceed at once to expel from his household and from his domains all the banditi (outlaws) and evildoers to whom, until then, he had given asylum.

Sixtus V was a singularly effective speaker, whatever tone he might adopt; but when he was angry and threatening, one would have said that his eyes flashed lightning. One thing certain is that Prince Paolo Orsini, accustomed all his life to be feared by Popes, was led to think so seriously of his own position by the Pope's way of speaking, the like of which he had not heard for thirteen years, that no sooner had he left His Holiness's Palace than he hastened to Cardinal de' Medici to tell him what had occurred. After which he decided, on the Cardinal's advice, to send packing, without a moment's delay, all the fugi-' tives from justice to whom he had given asylum in his palazzo and on his estates, and began to look about for some honourable pretext for leaving the territory subjected to the power of so resolute a Pontiff.

It should be explained that Prince Paolo Orsini had become extraordinarily stout; his legs were thicker than an ordinary man's whole body, and one of these enormous legs was afflicted with the disease known as the lupa, or wolf, so called because it has to be fed upon an abundance of fresh meat which is applied to the affected part; otherwise the violent distemper, finding no dead flesh to devour, would begin to attack the living flesh that surrounds it.

The Prince made this malady an excuse for going to the celebrated baths of Abano, near Padua, on territory belonging to the Venetian Republic; he set

off with his new bride about the middle of June. Abano was a safe haven for him, since, for a great many years past, the House of Orsini had been tied to the Venetian Republic by a chain of mutual services.

Having reached this land of safety, the Prince's one thought was to combine the delights of several places of residence; and, with this object, he took three magnificent palazzi: one at Venice, the palazzo Dandolo, on the Rio della Zacca; the second at Padua, and this was the palazzo Foscarini, on the splendid piazza called the Arena; for his third abode he chose Salo, on the charming shore of Lake Garda: this had originally belonged to the Sforza Pallavicini.

The Signori of Venice (the Government of the Republic) learned with pleasure of the arrival within their borders of so great a Prince, and at once offered him a most noble condotta (that is to say a considerable sum paid annually, which the Prince would be expected to spend on raising a body of two or three thousand men, of whom he would assume the command). The Prince hastily rejected this offer: he sent word to the Senators that albeit, by a natural inclination and one hereditary in his family, he felt himself drawn to the service of the Most Serene Republic, yet, inasmuch as he was for the time being attached to His Catholic Majesty, it did not seem to him proper that he should accept any other engagement. So decided a response created some warmth of feeling among the Senators. At first they had thought of greeting him, on his arrival in Venice, and in the name of the people as a whole, with a most honourable reception; they now decided, in view of his reply, to allow him to enter the city as a private person.

Prince Orsini, who was kept well informed, vowed that he would not go to Venice at all. He was already in the neighbourhood of Padua, he made a detour through that admirable country, and betook himself, with his whole retinue, to the house prepared for him at Salo, on the shores of Lake Garda. There he spent the whole of that summer amid splendid and varied diversions.

The time for a change (of residence) having come, the Prince made a number of little expeditions, after which he found that he could no longer endure fatigue as in the past; he began to be alarmed for his health; finally he

thought of going to spend a few days at Venice, but was dissuaded by his wife, Vittoria, who begged him to remain at Salo.

There are some who have expressed the opinion that Vittoria Accoramboni was aware of the peril which threatened the life of the Prince, her husband, and that she made him stay at Salo only with the object of taking him, later on, out of Italy, to some free city, for instance, in the Swiss Cantons; in this way she would safeguard, in the event of the Prince's death, both her own person and her private fortune.

Whether or not this conjecture be well founded, the fact remains that nothing of the sort occurred, for the Prince, after a fresh attack of his malady at Salo on the loth of November, at once had a premonition of what was in store.

He felt sorry for his unfortunate wife; he saw her, in the fine flower of her youth, left as poor in reputation as in worldly goods, hated by the reigning princes of Italy, little loved by the Orsini, and without hope of another marriage after his death. Like a great-hearted gentleman, faithful to his pledged word, he made, of his own accord, a will by which he hoped to assure the unfortunate woman's fortune. He left her, in money or in jewels, the considerable sum of one hundred thousand piastres, [Footnote: About two million francs in 1837.] apart from all the horses, carriages and movable property which he had used on this expedition. All the rest of his fortune he left to Virginie Orsini, his only son, whom he had had by his first wife, the sister of Francesco I., Grand Duke of Tuscany (the wife whom he had killed on account of her infidelity, with the consent of her brothers).

But how uncertain are all human anticipations! The arrangements which Paolo Orsini thought must assure perfect security to that unhappy young woman, proved to be the cause of her utter and immediate ruin.

After signing his will, the Prince felt slightly better on the 12th of November. On the morning of the l3th he was bled, and the doctors, whose only hope lay in a strict diet, left the most definite orders that he was to take no food.

But they had barely left the room before the Prince insisted that dinner should be brought to him; no one dared oppose his wishes, and he ate and

drank as usual. Scarcely was the meal ended before he lost consciousness, and two hours before sunset he was dead.

After this sudden death, Vittoria Accoramboni, accompanied by Marcello, her brother, and by the whole of the deceased Prince's household, repaired to Padua to the palazzo Foscarini, situated near the Arena, the palazzo in fact that Prince Orsini had taken.

Shortly after her arrival, she was joined by her brother Flaminio, who stood high in the favour of Cardinal Farnese. She then began to take the necessary measures to obtain payment of the legacy which her husband had bequeathed to her; this legacy amounted in cash to sixty thousand piastres, which were to be paid to her within a period of two years, and this sum was independent of her dowry, jointure, and all the jewels and furniture actually in her possession. Prince Orsini had ordered, in his will, that in Rome or such other city as the Duchess might choose, a palazzo should be bought for her to the value of ten thousand piastres, and a vineyard (a country house) of six thousand; he had further laid down that provision should be made for her table and for the whole of her service as befitted a woman of her rank. The household was to consist of forty servants, with a corresponding number of horses.

Donna Vittoria had great hopes of the favour of the Princes of Ferrara, Florence and Urbino, as well as of that of Cardinals Farnese and de' Medici, appointed by the late Prince the executors of his will. It is to be observed that the will had been drafted at Padua, and submitted to the judgment of the most excellent Parrizoli and Menocchio, the leading professors of that University, and among the most famous jurists of the present day.

Prince Luigi Orsini arrived at Padua to carry out whatever might have to be done with regard to the late Duke and his widow, before proceeding to take over the government of the Isle of Corfu, to which he had been appointed by the Most Serene Republic.

There arose first of all a difficulty between Donna Vittoria and Prince Luigi with regard to the late Duke's horses, which the Prince said were not movable property in the general acceptation of the term; but the Duchess proved that they must be regarded as movable property so called, and it was

decided that she should retain the use of them until the question was settled; she gave as a surety Signor Soardi of Bergamo, Condottiere to the Signori of Venice, a gentleman of great wealth and of the highest rank in his own country.

Another difficulty then arose with regard to a certain quantity of silver plate which the late Duke had handed over to Prince Luigi as a pledge for a sum of money which he had lent the Duke. Everything was decided by recourse to the law, for His Serenity (i.e. the Duke) of Ferrara took care that the last wishes of the late Prince Orsini should he given entire fulfilment.

This second question was settled on the 23rd of December, which was a Sunday.

That night, forty men entered the house of the aforesaid Accoramboni. They were dressed in coats of cloth, cut in a fantastic manner and so arranged that they could not be recognised, unless by the sound of their voices; and when they called to one another they made use of cant names.

They began by making a search for the Duchess herself, and, when they had found her, one of them said to her: “Now you must die.”

And without giving her a moment, while she was begging to be allowed to commend her soul to God, he stabbed her with a fine dagger below the left breast; and, turning the point of it in all directions, the cruel wretch asked the unhappy woman several times to tell him if it was touching her heart; at length she breathed her last. Meanwhile the others were looking for the Duchess’s brothers, one of whom, Marcello, escaped with his life, because he could not be found in the house; the other was stabbed by a hundred blows. The murderers left the dead bodies on the ground, the whole household weeping and shrieking; and, having seized the strong box containing the jewels and money, took their departure.

The news of this crime came rapidly to the ears of the magistrates of Padua; they had the bodies identified, and sent to Venice for further orders.

Throughout the Monday, an immense crowd assembled round the aforesaid palazzo and in the church of the Eremitani, to see the bodies. The curious

were moved to pity, especially when they saw the beauty of the Duchess: they wept for her misfortunes, et dentibus fremebant (and gnashed their teeth) at the murderers; but as yet these were not known by name.

The corte having arrived at the strongly founded suspicion that the crime had been committed by the order, or at least with the consent of the said Prince Luigi, summoned him before it, and as he sought to appear in corte (before the court) of the Most Illustrious Captain with a train of forty armed men, the door was barred, and he was told that he must enter with three or four only. But, as these were crossing the threshold, the others dashed in after them, thrusting aside the guards, and the whole body entered the court.

Prince Luigi, appearing before the Most Illustrious Captain, complained of this insult, asserting that he had never received such treatment from any Sovereign Prince. The Most Illustrious Captain having asked him if he knew anything of the death of Donna Vittoria, he replied that he did, and had ordered a report to be made to the officers of justice. It was proposed to take down his answer in writing; he protested that men of his rank were not bound by that formality, and, apparently, might not be examined at all.

Prince Luigi asked leave to dispatch a courier to Florence with a letter for Prince Virginie Orsini, to whom he was making a report of the proceedings and of the crime. He shewed a false letter, not that which he intended to send, and his request was granted.

But his messenger was arrested outside the city and carefully searched; the letter was found on him which Prince Luigi had shewn, and also a second letter concealed in one of his boots; this ran as follows:

“To THE LORD VIROINIO ORSINI.

“Most Illustrious Lord,

“We have put into execution what was agreed upon between us, and so successfully that we have completely taken in the Most Illustrious Tondini” (this is apparently the name of the head of the corte which had examined the Prince), “so that I am regarded here as the most gallant gentleman alive. I did the deed in person, so do not fail to send at once you know whom.”

This letter made a strong impression on the magistrates; they made haste to send it to Venice; by their orders the gates of the city were shut, and the walls manned by troops, day and night. A warning was published threatening severe penalties to any who, knowing the identity of the assassins, should fail to communicate what he knew to the authorities. Such of the assassins as gave evidence against any of their number were not to be molested, in fact a sum of money was to be paid to them. But about the seventh hour of the night, on Christmas Eve (towards midnight on the 24th of December), Aloisio Bragadin arrived from Venice, with ample authority from the Senate, and orders to secure the arrest, alive or dead, and at no matter what cost, of the afore-mentioned Prince Luigi and all his men. The said Signor Avogador Bragadin, the Signor Capitano and the Signor Podestà made their headquarters in the fortress.

Orders were issued, on pain of the gallows (della forca) to all the militia, horse and foot, to assemble well armed round the house of the said Prince Luigi, which stood near the fortress and adjoined the Church of Sant' Agostino on the Arena.

When the day (which was Christmas Day) came, an edict was published in the town calling upon all the sons of Saint Mark to arm themselves and hasten to the house of Don Luigi; those who had no arms were summoned to the fortress, where they would be given all that they required; this edict promised a reward of two thousand ducats to whosoever should hand over to the corte, dead or alive, the said Don Luigi, and five hundred ducats for the person of each of his followers. There was furthermore an order that any who were unarmed were on no account to approach the Prince's house, so that they should not be in the way of the fighting men were the Prince to think fit to make a sally.

At the same time siege guns, mortars and heavy artillery were mounted on the old walls, opposite the house occupied by the Prince; others were mounted on the new walls, which overlooked the rear of the said house. On this side the cavalry had been posted in such a way as to be able to move freely, should they be required. On the banks of the river Brenta people were busily arranging benches, cupboards, carts and other such things suitable for parapets. It was hoped in this way to put a stop to the movement of the besieged, should they attempt to march out in close order against the

populace. These parapets would serve also to protect the gunners and infantry against the arquebusades of the besieged.

Last of all, a number of boats appeared on the river, opposite and on either side of the Prince's house, filled with men armed with muskets and other weapons calculated to harass the enemy should he attempt to break out: meanwhile barricades were erected in all the streets.

While these preparations were being made, a letter arrived, couched in the most dignified terms, in which the Prince complained of being found guilty, and of seeing himself treated as an enemy, and indeed a. rebel, before any investigation had been made into the crime. This letter had been composed by Liveroto.

On the 27th of December, three gentlemen, among the foremost in the city, were sent by the magistrates to Don Luigi, who had with him, in his house, forty men, old soldiers all of them and inured to danger. They were found to be engaged in fortifying the house with parapets made of planks and soaked mattresses, and in making ready their arquebuses.

These three gentlemen announced to the Prince that the magistrates were determined to seize his person; they advised him to surrender, adding that, by so doing, before the first shot was fired, he would have some hope of being treated with mercy. To which Don Luigi replied that if, first of all, the guards posted round about his house were withdrawn, he would go to the magistrates accompanied by two or three of his men, to discuss the matter, on the express understanding that he should be free to return at any time to his house.

The ambassadors took a note, written in his hand, of these proposals, and returned to the magistrates, who refused the conditions, acting especially on the advice of the most illustrious Pio Enea, and of other nobles there present. The ambassadors then returned to the Prince, and informed him that, if he did not make a surrender, pure and simple, of his person, his house would be razed to the ground by artillery; to which he replied that he preferred death to such an act of submission.

The magistrates gave the signal for the battle, and, although it would have been possible to destroy the whole house almost with a single discharge, it was decided to proceed more slowly, to see whether the besieged would not agree to surrender.

This plan proved successful, and saved Saint Mark a great deal of money which would have had to be spent on rebuilding the ruined parts of the bombarded palace; it did not, however, meet with general approval. If Don Luigi's men had acted without hesitation, and had made a dash from the house, the success of the siege would have been far from certain. They were old soldiers, they had no lack of munitions, of arms or of courage, and above all it was to their interest to win; was it not better for them, if the worse came to the worst, to die from the shot of an arquebus rather than by the hand of the executioner? Besides, with whom had they to deal? With a wretched band of besiegers with little experience of arms, and the Signori might then have had cause to repent of their clemency and their instinctive tenderness.

So they began by bombarding the colonnade that ran along the front of the house; then, aiming a little higher, destroyed the front wall of the building behind it. Meanwhile the men inside fired round after round from their arquebuses, but with no effect beyond wounding a humble citizen in the shoulder.

Don Luigi cried in the most impetuous fashion: "Battle! battle! war! war!" He was greatly taken up with casting bullets from the pewter of the plates and the lead from the windows. He threatened to make a sally, but the besiegers adopted new measures, and brought up guns of a larger calibre.

The first shot fired from these brought down a great piece of the house, and a certain Pandolfo Leupratti of Camerino was buried in the ruins. This was a man of great courage, and a bandit of considerable importance. He was banished from the States of Holy Church, and a price of four hundred piastres had been placed on his head by the most illustrious Signor Vitelli, for the death of Vincenzo Vitelli, who had been attacked in his carriage, and killed by arquebus shots and dagger thrusts, given by Prince Luigi Orsini through the instrumentality of the said Pandolfo and his associates. Stunned by his fall, Pandolfo was incapable of making any movement; a servant of the Signori Capodilìsta advanced upon him armed with a pistol, and very

courageously cut off his head, which he made haste to take to the fortress and hand over to the magistrates.

Shortly afterwards a shot from another gun brought down a wall of the house, and with it the Conte Montemelino of Perugia, who died amid the ruins, blown to pieces by the ball.

After this a person was seen to leave the house named Colonel Lorenzo, of the nobility of Camerino, a man of great wealth who had on several occasions furnished proofs of his valour, and was highly esteemed by the Prince. He was determined not to die without striking a blow of some sort; he tried to fire his gun, but when he pressed the trigger, it so happened, doubtless by the will of God, that the arquebus missed fire, and at that moment a bullet went through his body. The shot had been fired by a poor devil, an usher in the school of San Michele. And while he, to gain the promised reward, was approaching his victim to cut off his head, he was forestalled by others nimbler, and, what was more, stronger than himself, who took the Colonel's purse, belt, gun, money and rings, and cut off his head.

The men in whom Prince Luigi had reposed most confidence being dead, he was left in great embarrassment, and it was observed that he no longer made any movement.

Signor Filenfi, his maestro di casa and secretary in civilian attire, made a signal from a balcony with a white handkerchief that he surrendered. He left the house and was taken to the citadel, led by the arm, as is said to be the custom of war, by Anselmo Suardo, Lieutenant to the Signori (the magistrates). Being immediately examined, he said that he was in no way to blame for what had occurred, because he had arrived on Christmas Eve only from Venice, where he had been detained for some days on the Prince's business.

He was asked how many men the Prince had with him, and replied: "Twenty or thirty persons."

He was asked their names, and answered that there were nine or ten of them who, being persons of quality, ate, like himself, at the Prince's table, and that

he knew their names, but that of the others, people of a vagabond life who had but recently joined the Prince, he had no personal knowledge.

He gave the names of thirteen persons, including the brother of Liveroto.

Shortly afterwards the artillery placed on the city walls opened fire. The soldiers posted themselves in the houses adjoining that of the Prince to prevent his men from escaping. The said Prince, who had been running the same risks as the two whose death we have related, told those round about him to hold out until they should receive a message written by his hand and accompanied by a certain sign; after which he surrendered to that Anselmo Suardo, already named. And, because he could not be taken in a coach, as was laid down, on account of the great crowd of people and the barricades that blocked the streets, it was decided that he should go on foot.

He marched amid a party of Marcello Accoramboni's men; he had on either side of him the Signori Condottieri, Lieutenant Suardo, other Captains and gentlemen of the city, all well provided with arms. Next came a strong company of men at arms and soldiers of the city. Prince Luigi wore a suit of brown, his stiletto by his side, and his cloak gathered under his arm with the most elegant air; he remarked with a disdainful smile: "If I had fought!" almost implying that he would have won. Brought before the Signori, he at once bowed to them and said:

"Sirs, I am the prisoner of this gentleman," pointing to Signor Anselmo, "and I am extremely annoyed at what has happened, by no fault of mine."

The Captain having ordered the stiletto which he wore at his side to be taken from him, he leaned against a balcony and began to trim his nails with a pair of small scissors which he found there.

He was asked whom he had in his house; he named among the rest Colonel Liveroto and Conte Montemelino, of whom mention has been made above, adding that he would give ten thousand piastres to redeem the life of one of them, and for the other would give his very life's blood. He asked to be taken to a place befitting a man of his rank. Matters being thus arranged, he wrote with his own hand a message to his supporters, ordering them to surrender, and sent his ring as a token. He told Signor Anselmo that he gave

him his sword and his musket, requesting him, when those weapons should have been found in his house, to make use of them for his sake, as being the arms of a gentleman and not of any common soldier.

The troops entered the house, making a thorough search of it, and at once held a roll call of the Prince's men, who survived to the number of thirty-four, after which they were led out two by two to the prison of the Palace. The dead were left to be devoured by the dogs, and a report of the whole affair was sent to Venice.

It was noticed that many of Prince Luigi's soldiers, who had been implicated in the crime, were no longer to be found; the people were forbidden to harbour them, any who did so to be punished with the destruction of his house and confiscation of his property; those who denounced them were to receive fifty piastres. By this method several were apprehended.

A frigate was dispatched from Venice to Candia, bearing orders to Don Latino Orsini to return at once on a matter of great importance, and it is thought that he will lose his command.

Yesterday morning, which was the feast of Saint Stephen, everyone expected to see the death of the aforesaid Prince Luigi, or to hear it announced that he had been strangled in prison; and would have been greatly surprised had it been otherwise, since he was not a bird to be kept for long in a cage. But that evening the trial was held, and on Saint John's day, shortly before dawn, it became known that the said Lord had been strangled, and that he had made a good end. His body was carried without delay to the Cathedral, accompanied by the clergy of that church and by the Jesuit fathers. It was left exposed all day on a table in the middle of the church, to serve as a spectacle to the people and as a mirror to the inexperienced.

On the following day his body was conveyed to Venice, as he had ordered in his will, and there buried.

On Saturday two of his followers were hanged; the first and principal was Furio Savorgnano, the other a common person.

On Monday, which was the penultimate day of the aforesaid year, they hanged thirteen, several of whom were of high nobility; other two, one named Capitan Splendiano and the other Conte Paganello, were led through the town and mildly tortured; on reaching the place of execution, they were beaten, had their heads broken, and were quartered, the life being still in their bodies. These men were noble, and, before they took to evil courses, were extremely rich. Some say that it was Conte Paganello who killed Donna Vittoria Accorainboni with the cruelty that has been recorded. To this it is objected that Prince Luigi, in the letter already quoted, attests that he did the deed with his own hand; this may perhaps have been from vainglory, like that which he shewed in Rome when he had Vitelli murdered, or else to win more favour from Prince Virginie Orsini.

Conte Paganello, before receiving the fatal blow, was stabbed repeatedly with a knife below the left breast, so as to touch his heart, as he had done to the poor woman. In this way it came about that he shed a perfect torrent of blood from his breast. He remained alive for more than half an hour, to the great astonishment of all. He was a man of five and forty, who shewed signs of abundant strength.

The gibbets remain standing to dispatch the nineteen that are still alive, on the first day that is not a holiday. But, as the executioner is extremely tired, and the people in a sort of agony after witnessing so many deaths, their execution is being postponed for these, two days. It is expected that none of them will be left alive. The one exception made, among the persons attached to Prinee Luigi, will perhaps be Signor Filenfi, his maestro di casa, who is giving himself infinite pains (and indeed the matter is one of importance to him) to prove that he had no share in the crime.

No one, not even the oldest inhabitants of this city of Padua, can remember, by a more just sentence, the lives of so many persons to have been ever forfeited, on a single occasion. And the Signori (of Venice) have acquired for themselves high renown and a good reputation among the most civilised nations.

Added by another hand.

Francesco Filenfi, secretary and maestro dì casa, was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment, the cup-bearer (coppiere) Onorio Adami of Fermo, and two others, to one year's imprisonment; seven others were sent to the galleys, with fetters, while seven were released.

VANINA VANINI

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

This novella was first published in 1829 and concerns the love affair of a young Roman princess and a revolutionary carbonaro, set during the 1830s against the backdrop of the early Risorgimento, when Italy was under Austrian control. Vanina Vanini, the nineteen-year-old daughter of a Roman aristocrat, Don Asdrubale Vanini, is sought after by all the young princes of Rome, but refuses all of their advances. She is instead drawn to the mystery surrounding the woman her father is keeping locked away in a room in the palace, which launches Vanina into a world of intrigue and adventure.

VANINA VANINI

OR, SOME PARTICULARS OF THE LATEST ASSEMBLY OF CARBONARI DISCOVERED IN THE STATES OF THE CHURCH

It was a spring evening in 182 — . All Rome was astir: the Duca di B —— — , the famous banker, was giving a ball in his new palazzo on the Piazza di Venezia. All the most sumptuous treasures that the arts of Italy, the luxury of Paris and London can furnish had been collected for the adornment of this palace. The gathering was immense. The fair, retiring beauties of noble England had intrigued for the honour of being present at this ball; they arrived in crowds. The most beautiful women of Rome vied with them for the prize of beauty. A girl whom her sparkling eyes and ebon tresses proclaimed of Roman birth entered, escorted by her father; every eye followed her. A singular pride was displayed in her every gesture.

One could see the foreigners who entered the room struck by the magnificence of this ball. “None of the courts of Europe,” they were saying, “can compare with this.”

Kings have not a palace of Roman architecture: they are obliged to invite the great ladies of their courts; the Duca di B —— invites only lovely women. This evening he had been fortunate in his invitations; the men seemed dazzled. Amid so many remarkable women it was hard to decide which was the most beautiful: the award was for some time undetermined; but at length Principessa Vanina Vanini, the girl with the raven hair and fiery eye, was proclaimed queen of the ball. Immediately the foreigners and the young Romans, deserting all the other rooms, crowded into the room in which she was.

Her father, Principe Don Asdrubale Vanini, had wished her to dance first of all with two or three Sovereign Princes from Germany. She then accepted the invitations of certain extremely handsome and extremely noble

Englishmen; their starched manner irritated her. She appeared to find more pleasure in teasing young Livio Savelli, who seemed deeply in love. He was the most brilliant young man in Rome, and a Prince to boot; but, if you had given him a novel to read, he would have flung the book away after twenty pages, saying that it made his head ache. This was a disadvantage in Vanina's eyes.

Towards midnight a report ran through the ball-room, which caused quite a stir. A young carbonaro, in detention in the Castel S'ant' Angelo, had escaped that evening, with the help of a disguise, and, with an excess of romantic daring, on coming to the outermost guardroom of the prison, had attacked the soldiers there with a dagger; but he had been wounded himself, the sbirri were pursuing him through the streets, following the track of his blood, and hoped to recapture him.

While this story was going round, Don Livio Savelli, dazzled by the charms and the success of Vanina, with whom he had just been dancing, said to her as he led her back to her seat, being almost mad with love:

"Why, in heaven's name, what sort of person could please you?"

"This young carbonaro who has just made his escape," was Vanina's reply; "he at least has done something more than take the trouble to be born."

Principe Don Asdrubale approached his daughter. He is a wealthy man who for the last twenty years has kept no accounts with his steward, who lends him his own income at a high rate of interest. If you should pass him in the street, you would take him for an elderly actor; you would not notice that his fingers were loaded with five or six enormous rings set with huge diamonds. His two sons became Jesuits, and afterwards died insane. He has forgotten them, but it vexes him that his only daughter, Vanina, declines to marry. She is already nineteen, and has refused the most brilliant suitors. What is her reason? The same that led Sulla to abdicate, her contempt for the Romans.

On the day after the ball, Vanina remarked that her father, the most casual of men, who never in his life had taken the trouble to carry a key, was very careful in shutting the door of a little stair which led to an apartment on the third floor of the palazzo. The windows of this apartment looked on to a

terrace planted with orange trees. Vanina went out to pay some calls in Rome; on her return, the main door of the palazzo was blocked with the preparations for an illumination, the carriage drove in through the courtyards at the back. Vanina raised her eyes, and saw with astonishment that one of the windows of the apartment which her father had so carefully closed was now open. She got rid of her companion, climbed up to the attics of the palazzo and after a long search succeeded in finding a small barred window which overlooked the orange tree terrace. The open window which she had observed from below was within a few feet of her. Evidently the room was occupied; but by whom? Next day, Vanina managed to secure the key of a small door which opened on to the terrace planted with orange trees.

She stole on tiptoe to the window, which was still open. It was screened by a sunblind. Inside the room was a bed, and somebody in the bed. Her first impulse was to retire; but she caught sight of a woman's gown flung over a chair. On looking more closely at the person in the bed, she saw that this person was fair, and evidently quite young. She had no longer any doubt that it was a woman. The gown flung over the chair was stained with blood; there was blood also on the woman's shoes placed beneath a table. The stranger moved in the bed; Vanina saw that she had been wounded. A great bandage stained with blood covered her bosom; this bandage was fastened with ribbons only; it was not a surgeon's hand that had so arranged it. Vanina noticed that every day, about four o'clock, her father shut himself up in his own rooms, and then went to visit the stranger; presently he came downstairs and took his carriage to call upon the Contessa Vitelleschi. As soon as he had left the house, Vanina went up to the little terrace, from which she could see the stranger. Her compassion was strongly aroused towards this young woman who was in such a plight; she tried to imagine what could have befallen her. The bloodstained gown that lay on the chair appeared to have been stabbed with a dagger. Vanina could count the rents in it. One day she saw the stranger more distinctly: her blue eyes were fastened on the ceiling; she seemed to be praying. Presently tears welled in those lovely eyes; the young Princess could hardly refrain from addressing her. Next day, Vanina ventured to hide on the little terrace before her father came upstairs. She saw Don Asdrubale enter the stranger's room; he was carrying a small basket in which were provisions. The Prince appeared ill at ease, and said but little. He spoke so low that, although the window stood open, Vanina could not overhear his words He soon left.

“That poor woman must have very terrible enemies,” Vanina said to herself, “for my father, who is so careless by nature, not to dare to confide in anyone and to take the trouble to climb a hundred and twenty steps every day.”

One evening, as Vanina was cautiously extending her head towards the stranger’s window, their eyes met, and she was discovered. Vanina fell on her knees, crying:

“I love you, I am your devoted servant.”

The stranger beckoned to her to come in.

“How can I apologise to you?” cried Vanina; “how offensive my foolish curiosity must appear to you! I swear to keep your secret, and, if you insist on it, I will never come again.”

“Who would not be delighted to see you?” said the stranger. “Do you live in this palazzo?”

“Certainly,” replied Vanina. “But I see that you do not know me: I am Vanina, Don Asdrubale’s daughter.”

The stranger looked at her with an air of surprise, then went on:

“Please let me hope that you will come to see me every day; but I should prefer the Prince not to know of your visits.”

Vanina’s heart beat violently; the stranger’s manner seemed to her most distinguished. This poor young woman had doubtless given offence to some powerful man; possibly in a moment of jealousy she had killed her lover. Vanina could not conceive any common reason for her trouble. The stranger told her that she had received a wound in the shoulder, which had penetrated her breast and gave her great pain. Often she found her mouth filled with blood.

“And you have no surgeon!” cried Vanina.

“You know that in Rome,” said the stranger, “the surgeons have to furnish the police with an exact report of all the injuries that they treat. The Prince is

kind enough to dress my wounds himself with the bandage you see here."

The stranger refrained with the most perfect taste from any commiseration of her accident; Vanina loved her madly. One incident, however, greatly surprised the young Princess, which was that in the middle of a conversation which was certainly most serious the stranger had great difficulty in suppressing a sudden impulse to laughter.

"I should be happy," Vanina said to her, "to know your name."

"I am called Clementina."

"Very well, dear Clementina, tomorrow at five I shall come to see you."

Next day Vanina found her new friend in great pain.

"I am going to bring you a surgeon," said Vanina as she embraced her.

"I would rather die," said the stranger. "Would you have me compromise my benefactors?"

"The surgeon of Monsignor Savelli–Catanzara, the Governor of Rome, is the son of one of our servants," Vanina answered firmly; "he is devoted to us, and in his position has no fear of anyone. My father does not do justice to his loyalty; I am going to send for him."

"I do not want any surgeon!" cried the stranger with a vivacity which surprised Vanina. "Come and see me, and if God is to call me to Himself, I shall die happy in your arms."

On the following day the stranger was worse.

"If you love me," said Vanina as she left her, "you will see a surgeon."

"If he comes, my happiness is at an end."

"I am going to send to fetch him," replied Vanina.

Without saying a word, the stranger seized hold of her, and took her hand, which she covered with kisses. A long silence followed; tears filled the stranger's eyes. At length she let go Vanina's hand, and with the air of one going to her death, said to her:

"I have a confession to — make to you. The day before yesterday, I lied when I said that my name was Clementina; I am an unhappy carbonaro . . ."

Vanina in her astonishment thrust back her chair, and presently rose.

"I feel," went on the carbonaro, "that this confession is going to make me forfeit the one blessing which keeps me alive; but I should be unworthy of myself were I to deceive you. My name is Pietro Missirilli; I am nineteen; my father is a poor surgeon at Sant' Angelo in Vado, I myself am a carbonaro. Our venuta was surprised; I was brought, in chains, from the Romagna to Rome. Cast into a dungeon lighted day and night by a lamp, I lay there for thirteen months. A charitable soul conceived the idea of helping me to escape. I was dressed as a woman. As I was leaving the prison and passing by the guard at the outer gate, one of them cursed the carbonari; I dealt him a blow. I swear to you that it was not a piece of vain bravado, but simply that I was not thinking. Pursued by night through the streets of Rome after that act of folly, stabbed with bayonet wounds, I had begun to lose my strength, I entered a house the door of which stood open, I heard the soldiers coming in after me, I sprang into a garden; I fell to the ground within a few feet of a woman who was walking there."

"Contessa Vitelleschi! My father's mistress," said Vanina.

"What! Has she told you?" cried Missirilli. "However that may be, this lady, whose name must never be uttered, saved my life. As the soldiers were coming into her house to seize me, your father took me away in his carriage. I feel very ill: for some days this bayonet wound in my shoulder has prevented me from breathing. I am going to die, and in despair, since I shall not see you again."

Vanina had listened with impatience; she swiftly withdrew from the room. Missirilli read no pity in those lovely eyes, but only the signs of a proud nature which had been deeply offended.

When it was dark, a surgeon appeared; he was alone. Missirilli was in despair; he was afraid that he would never see Vanina again. He questioned the surgeon, who bled him and made no reply. A similar silence on each of the days that followed. Pietro's eyes never left the window on the terrace by which Vanina used to enter; he was very miserable. Once, about midnight, he thought he could see someone in the dark on the terrace: was it Vanina?

Vanina came each night to press her face against the panes of the young carbonaro's window.

"If I speak to him," she said to herself, "I am lost! No, I must never see him again!"

Having come to this resolution, she recalled, in spite of herself, the affection that she had formed for this young man when she had so stupidly taken him for a woman. After so pleasant an intimacy, must she then forget him? In her most reasonable moments, Vanina was alarmed by the change that was occurring in her ideas. Ever since Missirilli had told her his name, all the things of which she was in the habit of thinking were, so to speak, wrapped in a veil of mist, and appeared to her now only at a distance.

A week had not gone by before Vanina, pale and trembling, entered the young carbonaro's room with the surgeon. She had come to tell him that he must make the Prince promise to let his place be taken by a servant. She was not in the room for ten seconds; but some days later she came back again with the surgeon, from a sense of humanity. One evening, although Missirilli was much better, and Vanina had no longer the excuse of being alarmed for his life, she ventured to come unaccompanied. On seeing her, Missirilli was raised to a pinnacle of joy, but he was careful to conceal his love; whatever happened, he was determined not to forget the dignitv befitting a man. Vanina, who had come into the room blushing a deep crimson, and dreading amorous speeches, was disconcerted by the noble and devoted, but by no means tender friendliness with which he greeted her. She left without his making any attempt to detain her.

A few days later, when she returned, the same conduct, the same assurances of respectful devotion and eternal gratitude. So far from being occupied in putting a check on the transports of the young carbonaro, Vanina asked

herself whether she alone were in love. This girl, hitherto so proud, was bitterly aware of the full extent of her folly. She made a pretence of gaiety, and even of coldness, came less frequently, but could not bring herself to abandon her visits to the young invalid.

Missirilli, burning with love, but mindful of his humble birth and of what he owed to himself, had made a vow that he would not stoop to talk of love unless Vanina were to spend a week without seeing him. The pride of the young Princess contested every inch of ground.

“After all,” she said to herself at length, “if I see him, it is for my own sake, to please myself, and I will never confess to him the interest that he arouses in me.”

She paid long visits to Missirilli, who talked to her as he might have done had there been a score of persons present. One evening, after she had spent the day hating him, and promising herself that she would be even colder and more severe with him than usual, she told him that she loved him. Soon there was nothing left that she could withhold from him.

Great as her folly may have been, it must be admitted that Vanina was sublimely happy. Missirilli no longer thought of what he believed to be due to his dignity as a man; he loved as people love for the first time at nineteen and in Italy. He felt all the scruples of “impassioned love,” going so far as to confess to this haughty young Princess the stratagem which he had employed to make her love him. He was astounded by the fulness of his happiness. Four months passed rapidly enough. One day the surgeon set his patient at liberty. “What am I to do now?” thought Missirilli; “lie concealed in the house of one of the most beautiful people in Rome? And the vile tj’rants who kept me for thirteen months in prison without ever allowing me to see the light of day will think they have disheartened me! Italy, thou art indeed unfortunate, if thy sons forsake thee for so slight a cause!”

Vanina never doubted that Pietro’s greatest happiness lay in remaining permanently attached to herself; he seemed only too happy; but a saying of General Bonaparte echoed harshly in the young man’s heart and influenced the whole of his conduct with regard to women. In 1796, as General Bonaparte was leaving Brescia, the municipal councillors who were

escorting him to the gate of the city told him that the Brescians loved freedom more than any of the Italians.

“Yes,” he replied, “they love to talk about it to their mistresses.”

Missirilli said to Vanina with a visible air of constraint:

“As soon as it is dark, I must go out.”

“Be careful to come in again before daybreak; I shall be waiting for you.”

“By daybreak I shall be many miles from Rome.”

“Very well,” said Vanina coldly, “and where are you going?”

“To the Romagna, to have my revenge.”

“As I am rich,” Vanina went on with perfect calmness, “I hope that you will let me supply you with arms and money.”

Missirilli looked at her for some moments without moving a muscle; then, flinging himself into her arms:

“Soul of my life,” he said to her, “you make me forget everything, even my duty. But the nobler your heart is, the better you must understand me.”

Vanina wept freely, and it was agreed that he should not leave Rome until the following night.

“Pietro,” she said to him on the morrow, “you have often told me that a well-known man, a Roman Prince, for instance, with plenty of money at his disposal, would be in a position to render the utmost services to the cause of freedom, should Austria ever be engaged abroad, in some great war.”

“Undoubtedly,” said Pietro in surprise.

“Very well, you have a stout heart; all you lack is an exalted position: I have come to offer you my hand and an income of two hundred thousand lire. I undertake to obtain my father’s consent.”

Pietro fell at her feet; Vanina was radiant with joy.

“I love you passionately,” he told her; “but I am a humble servant of the Fatherland; the more unhappy Italy is, the more loyal I should be to her. To obtain Don Asdrubale’s consent, I shall have to play a sorry part for many years. Vanina, I decline your offer.”

Missirilli made haste to bind himself by this utterance. His courage was failing him.

“My misfortune,” he cried, “is that I love you more than life itself, that to leave Rome is for me the most agonising torture. Oh, that Italy were set free from the barbarians! With what joy would I set sail with you to go and live in America.”

Vanina’s heart was frozen. The refusal of her hand had dealt a blow to her pride; but presently she threw herself into Missirilli’s arms.

“Never have you seemed so adorable,” she cried; “yes, my little country surgeon, I am yours for ever. You are a great man, like our ancient Romans.”

All thoughts of the future, every depressing suggestion of common sense vanished; it was a moment of perfect love. When they were able to talk reasonably:

“I shall be in the Romagna almost as soon as you,” said Vanina. “I am going to have myself sent to the baths of la Porretta. I shall stop at the villa we have at San Niccolo, close to Forli. . . .”

“There I shall spend my life with you!” cried Missirilli.

“My lot henceforward is to dare all,” Vanina continued with a sigh. “I shall ruin myself for you, but no matter. . . . Will you be able to love a girl who has lost her honour?”

“Are you not my wife,” said Missirilli, “and the object of my lifelong adoration? I shall know how to love and protect you.”

Vanina was obliged to go out, on social errands. She had barely left Missirilli before he began to feel that his conduct was barbarous.

“What is the Fatherland?” he asked himself. “It is not a person to whom we owe gratitude for benefits received, or who may suffer and call down curses on us if we fail him. The Fatherland and Freedom are like my cloak, a thing which is useful to me, which I must purchase, it is true, when I have not acquired it by inheritance from my father; but after all I love the Fatherland and Freedom because they are both useful to me. If I have no use for them, if they are to me like a cloak in the month of August, what is the good of purchasing them, and at an enormous price? Vanina is so beautiful! She has so singular a nature! Others will seek to attract her; she will forget me. What woman is there who has never had more than one lover? Those Roman Princes, whom I despise as citizens, have so many advantages over me! They must indeed be attractive! Ah, if I go, she will forget me, and I shall lose her for ever.”

In the middle of the night, Vanina came to see him; he told her of the uncertainty in which he had been plunged, and the criticism to which, because he loved her, he had subjected that great word “Fatherland.” Vanina was very happy.

“If he were absolutely forced to choose between his country and me,” she told herself, “I should have the preference.”

The clock of the neighbouring church struck three, the time had come for a final leave-taking. Pietro tore himself from the arms of his mistress. He had begun to descend the little stair, when Vanina, restraining her tears, said to him with a smile:

“If you had been nursed by some poor woman in the country, would you do nothing to shew your gratitude? Would you not seek to repay her? The future is uncertain, you are going on a journey through the midst of your enemies: give me three days out of gratitude, as if I were a poor woman, and to pay me for the care I have taken of you.”

Missirilli stayed. At length he left Rome. Thanks to a passport bought from a foreign embassy, he returned in safety to his family. This was a great joy to

them; they had given him up for dead. His friends wished to celebrate his home-coming by killing a carabiniere or two (such is the title borne by the police in the Papal States).

“We must not, when it is not necessary, kill an Italian who knows how to handle arms,” said Missirilli; “our country is not an island, like happy England: it is soldiers that we need to resist the intervention of the Sovereigns of Europe.”

Some time later Missirilli, hard pressed by the carabinieri, killed a couple of them with the pistols which Vanina had given him. A price was set on his head.

Vanina did not appear in the Romagna: Missirilli imagined himself forgotten. His vanity was hurt; his thoughts began to dwell upon the difference in rank which divided him from his mistress. In a moment of weakness and regret for his past happiness it occurred to him that he might return to Rome to see what Vanina was doing. This mad idea was beginning to prevail over what he believed to be his duty when one evening the bell of a church in the mountains sounded the Angelus in a singular fashion, and as though the ringer were thinking of something else. It was the signal for the assembling of the venuta of carbonari which Missirilli had joined on his arrival in Romagna. That night, they all met at a certain hermitage in the woods. The two hermits, drugged with opium, knew nothing of the use to which their little dwelling was being put. Missirilli, who arrived in great depression, learned there that the leader of the venuta had been arrested, and that he, a young man not twenty years old, was about to be elected leader of a venuta which included men of fifty and more, who had taken part in all the conspiracies since Murat’s expedition in 1815. On receiving this unexpected honour, Pietro felt his heart beat violently. As soon as he was alone, he determined to give no more thought to the young Roman who had forgotten him, and to devote his whole mind to the duty of freeing Italy from the barbarians. [Footnote: Liberar l’Italia de’ barbari: the words used by Petrarch in 1350, and since then repeated by Julius II, Machiavelli and Conte Alfieri.]

Two davs later, Missirilli saw in the reports of arrivals and departures which were supplied to him, as leader of the venuta, that the Principessa Vanina had just arrived at her villa of San Niccolo. The sight of that name caused

him more uneasiness than pleasure. It was in vain that he imagined himself to be proving his loyalty to his country by undertaking not to fly that very evening to the villa of San Niccolo; the thought of Vanina, whom he was neglecting, prevented him from carrying out his duty in a reasonable manner. He saw her next day; she loved him still as in Rome. Her father, who wished her to marry, had delayed her departure. She brought him two thousand sequins. This unexpected assistance served admirably to accredit Missirilli in his new office. They had daggers made for them in Corfu; they won over the Legate's private secretary, whose duty it was to pursue the carbonari. Thus they obtained a list of the clergy who were acting as spies for the government.

It was at this time that the organisation was completed of one of the least senseless conspiracies that have been planned in unhappy Italy. I shall not enter here into irrelevant details. I shall merely say that if success had crowned the attempt, Missirilli would have been able to claim a good share of the glory. At a signal from him, several thousands of insurgents would have risen, and awaited, armed, the coming of their superior leaders. The decisive moment was approaching when, as invariably happens, the conspiracy was paralyzed by the arrest of the leaders.

Immediately on her arrival in Romagna, Vanina felt that his love of his country would make her young lover forget all other love. The young Roman's pride was stung. She tried in vain to reason with herself; a black melancholy seized her: she found herself cursing freedom. One day when she had come to Forli to see Missirilli, she was powerless to check her grief, which until then her pride had managed to control.

"Truly," she said to him, "you love me like a husband; that is not what I have a right to expect."

Soon her tears flowed; but they were tears of shame at having so far lowered herself as to reproach him. Missi-rilli responded to these tears like a man preoccupied with other things. Suddenly it occurred to Vanina to leave him and return to Rome. She found a cruel joy in punishing herself for the weakness that had made her speak. After a brief interval of silence, her mind was made up; she would feel herself unworthy of Missirilli if she did not leave him. She rejoiced in the thought of his pained surprise when he should

look around for her in vain. Presently the reflexion that she had not succeeded in obtaining the love of the man for whom she had done so many foolish things moved her profoundly. Then she broke the silence, and did everything in the world to wring from him a word of love. He said, with a distracted air, certain quite tender things to her; but it was in a very different tone that, in speaking of his political enterprises, he sorrowfully exclaimed:

“Ah, if this attempt does not succeed, if the government discovers it again, I give up the struggle.”

Vanina remained motionless. For the last hour, she had felt that she would never look upon her lover again. The words he had now uttered struck a fatal spark in her mind. She said to herself:

“The carbonari have had several thousands from me. No one can doubt my devotion to the conspiracy.”

Vanina emerged from her musings only to say to Pietro:

“Will you come and spend the night with me at San Niccolo? Your meeting this evening can do without you. To-morrow morning, at San Niccolo, we can take the air together; that will calm your agitation and restore the cool judgment you require on great occasions.”

Pietro agreed.

Vanina left him to make ready for the journey, locking the door, as usual, of the little room in which she had hidden him.

She hastened to the house of one of her former maids who had left her service to marry and keep a small shop in Forli. On reaching the house, she wrote in haste on the margin of a Book of Hours which she found in the woman’s room, an exact indication of the spot at which the venuta of carbonari was to assemble that evening. She concluded lier denunciation with the words: “This venuta is composed of nineteen members; their names and addresses are as follows.” Having written this list, which was quite accurate except that the name of Missirilli was omitted, she said to the woman, on whom she could rely:

“Take this book to the Cardinal Legate; make him read what is written in it, and give you back the book. Here are ten sequins; if the Legate ever utters your name, your death is certain; but you will save my life if you make the Legate read the page I have just written.”

All went well. The Legate’s fear prevented him from standing upon his dignity. He allowed the humble woman who asked to speak with him to appear before him with only a mask, but on condition that her hands were tied. In this state the shop-keeper was brought into the presence of the great personage, whom she found entrenched behind an immense table, covered with a green cloth.

The Legate read the page in the Book of Hours, holding it at a distance, for fear of some subtle poison. He gave it back to the woman, and did not have her followed. In less than forty minutes after she had left her lover, Vanina, who had seen her former maid return, appeared once more before Missirilli, imagining that for the future he was entirely hers. She told Mm that^there was an extraordinary commotion in the town; patrols of carabinieri were to be seen in streets along which they never went as a rule.

“If you will take my advice,” she went on, “we will start this very instant for San Niccolo.”

Missirilli agreed. They proceeded on foot to the young Princess’s carriage, which, with her companion, a discreet and well-rewarded confidant, was waiting for her half a league from the town.

Having reached the San Niccolo villa, Vanina, disturbed by the thought of what she had done, multiplied her attentions to her lover. But when speaking to him of love she felt that she was playing a part. The day before, when she betrayed him, she had forgotten remorse. As she clasped her lover in her arms, she said to herself:

“There is a certain word which someone may say to him, and once that word is uttered, then and for all time, he will regard me with horror.”

In the middle of the night, one of Vanina’s servants came boldly into her room. This man was a carbonaro, and she had never known it. So Missirilli

had secrets from her, even in these matters of detail. She shuddered. The man had come to inform Missirilli that during the night, at Forli, the houses of nineteen carbonari had been surrounded and they themselves arrested as they were returning from the venuta. Although taken unawares, nine of them had escaped. The carabinieri had managed to convey ten to the prison of the citadel. On their way in, one of these had flung himself down the well, which was deep, and had killed himself.

Vanina lost countenance; happily Pietro did not observe her; he could have read her crime in her eyes. . . . "At the present moment," the servant went on, "the Forli garrison is lining all the streets. Each soldier is close enough to the next to be able to speak to him. The inhabitants cannot cross from one side of the street to the other except at the places where there is an officer posted."

After the man had left them, Pietro remained pensive for a moment only.

"There is nothing to be done for the present," he said finally.

Vanina was half dead; she trembled under her lover's gaze.

"Why, what is the matter with you?" he asked her.

Then his thoughts turned to other things, and he ceased to look at her. Towards midday she ventured to say to him:

"And so another venuta has been surprised; I hope that you are going to be undisturbed now for some time."

"Quite undisturbed," replied Missirilli with a smile which made her shudder.

She went to pay a necessary call upon the parish priest of San Niccolo, who might perhaps be a spy of the Jesuits. On returning to dine at seven o'clock, she found the little room in which her lover had been concealed empty. Beside herself with alarm, she ran over the whole house in search of him. In despair, she returned to the little room, and it was only then that she saw a note; she read:

“I am going to give myself up to the Legate; I despair of our cause; heaven is against us. Who has betrayed us? Evidently the wretch who flung himself down the well. Since my life is of no use to poor Italy, I do not wish that my comrades, seeing that I alone have not been arrested, should imagine that I have sold them. Farewell; if you love me, try to avenge me. Destroy, crush the scoundrel who has betrayed us, even if he should be my own father.”

Vanina sank down on a chair, half unconscious, and plunged in the most agonizing grief. She could not utter a word; her eyes were parched and burning.

At length she flung herself upon her knees:

“Great God!” she cried, “hear my vow; yes, I will punish the scoundrel who has betrayed them; but first I must set Pietro free.”

An hour later, she was on her way to Rome. Her father had long been pressing her to return. During her absence, he had arranged her marriage with Principe Livio Savelli. Immediately on Vanina’s arrival, he spoke to her of this marriage, in fear and trembling. Greatly to his surprise, she consented from the first. That evening, at Contessa Vitelleschi’s, her father presented to her, semi-officially, Don Livio; she conversed with him freely. He was the most exquisite young man, and had the finest horses of any; but although he was admitted to have plenty of intelligence, he was regarded as so frivolous that he was held in no suspicion by the government. Vanina reflected that, by first of all turning his head, she might make a useful agent of him. As he was the nephew of Monsignor Savelli–Catanzara, Governor of Rome and Minister of Police, she supposed that the government spies would not dare to follow him.

After shewing herself most kind, for some days, to the charming Don Livio, Vanina broke to him that he could never be her husband; he had, according to her, too light a mind.

“If you were not a mere boy,” she told him, “your uncle’s clerks would have no secrets for you. For instance, what action is being taken with regard to the carbonari who were surprised the other day at Forli?”

Don Livio came to inform her, a few days later, that all the carbonari taken at Forli had escaped. She let her large black eyes rest on him with a bitter smile of the most profound contempt, and did not condescend to speak to him throughout the evening. Two days later, Don Livio came to confess to her, blushing as he did so, that he had been misinformed at first.

"But," he told her, "I have secured a key to my uncle's room; I see from the papers I found there that a congregation (or commission) composed of the Cardinals and prelates who are most highly considered is meeting in the strictest secrecy, and discussing whether it would be better to try these carbonari at Ravenna or in Rome. The nine carbonari taken at Forli and their leader, a certain Missirilli, who was fool enough to give himself up, are at this moment confined in the castle of San Leo." [Footnote: Near Rimini in Romagna. It was in this castle that the famous Cagliostro died; the local report is that he was smothered there.]

At the word "fool," Vanina gripped the Prince with all her strength.

"I wish," she said, "to see the official papers myself, and to go with you into your uncle's room; you must have misread what you saw."

At these words, Don Livio shuddered; Vanina asked a thing that was almost impossible; but the girl's eccentric nature intensified his love for her. A few days later, Vanina, disguised as a man and wearing a neat little jacket in the livery of the casa Savelli, was able to spend half an hour among the most secret documents of the Minister of Police. She started with joyful excitement when she came upon the daily report on Pietro Missirilli, on remand. Her hands shook as she seized the paper. On reading the name again, she felt as though she must faint. As they left the palace of the Governor of Rome, Vanina permitted Don Livio to embrace her.

"You are coming very well," she told him, "through the tests to which I mean to subject you."

After such a compliment, the young Prince would have set fire to the Vatican to please Vanina. That evening, there was a ball at the French Ambassador's; she danced frequently, and almost always with him. Don Livio was wild with joy; he must be kept from thinking.

“My father sometimes acts oddly,” Vanina said to him one day; “this morning he dismissed two of his servants, who came to me in tears. One asked me to find him a place with your uncle the Governor of Rome; the other, who served as a gunner under the French, wishes to be employed in the Castel Sant’ Angelo.”

“I will take them both into my service,” said the young Prince impulsively.

“Is that what I am asking you to do?” Vanina answered haughtily. “I repeat to you word for word the request made by these poor men; they must obtain what they have asked for, and nothing else.”

It was the hardest thing imaginable. Monsignor Catan-zara was the most serious of men, and admitted into his household only people well known to himself. In the midst of a life filled, apparently, with every pleasure, Vanina, crushed by remorse, was most unhappy. The slow course of events was killing her. Her father’s man of business had supplied her with money. Ought she to fly from the paternal roof and make her way to the Romagna to try to compass her lover’s escape? Absurd as this idea was, she was on the point of putting it into execution, when chance took pity on her.

Don Livio said to her:

“The ten carbonari of the Missirilli venuta are going to be transferred to Rome, except that they will be executed in the Romagna after they have been sentenced. My uncle obtained the Pope’s authority for that this evening. You and I are the only two people in Rome who know this secret. Are you satisfied?”

“You are growing into a man,” replied Vanina; “you may make me a present of your portrait.”

On the day before that on which Missirilli was to reach Rome, Vanina found an excuse for going to Città Castellana. It is in the prison of this town that carbonari are lodged on their way from the Romagna to Rome. She saw Missirilli in the morning, as he was leaving the prison: he was chained by himself upon a cart; he struck her as very pale but not at all despondent. An

old woman tossed him a bunch of violets; Missirilli thanked her with a smile.

Vanina had seen her lover, her mind seemed to revive; she felt fresh courage. Long before this she had procured a fine advancement for the Abate Cari, Chaplain of the Castel Sant' Angelo, in which her lover was to be confined; she had chosen this worthy priest as her confessor. It is no small matter in Rome to be the confessor of a Princess, who is the Governor's niece.

The trial of the carbonari from Forli did not take long. To be revenged for their transfer to Rome, which it had been unable to prevent, the "ultra" party had the commission which was to try them packed with the most ambitious prelates. Over this commission presided the Minister of Police.

The law against the carbonari is clear: the men from Forli could entertain no hope; they fought for their lives nevertheless by every possible subterfuge. Not only did their judges condemn them to death, but several were in favour of cruel tortures, amputation of the right hand, and so forth. The Minister of Police, whose fortune was made (for one leaves that office only to assume the Hat), was in no need of amputated hands: on submitting the sentence to the Pope, he had the penalty commuted to some years of imprisonment for all the prisoners. The sole exception was Pietro Missirilli. The Minister regarded the young man as a dangerous fanatic, in addition to which he had already been sentenced to death as guilty of the murder of the two carabinieri whom we have mentioned. Vanina knew of the sentence and its commutation within a few minutes of the Minister's return from seeing the Pope.

On the following evening, when Monsignor Catanzara returned to his palace about midnight, his valet was not to be found; the Minister, somewhat surprised, rang several times; finally an aged and half-witted servant appeared; the Minister, losing patience, decided to undress himself. He turned the key in his door; it was a hot night: he took off his coat, and flung it in a heap upon a chair. This coat, thrown with excessive force, went beyond the chair, and fell against the muslin curtain of the window, behind which it outlined the figure of a man. The Minister sprang swiftly to his bedside and seized a pistol. As he was returning to the window, a man quite young, wearing his livery, came towards him, pistol in hand. Seeing him

advance, the Minister raised his own pistol to his eye; and was about to fire. The young man said to him with a laugh:

“Why, Monsignor, do not you recognise Vanina Vanini?”

“What is the meaning of this ill-timed foolery?” replied the Minister angrily.

“Let us discuss the matter calmly,” said the girl. “In the first place, your pistol is not loaded.”

The Minister, taken aback, found that this was so; whereupon he took out a dagger from the pocket of his waistcoat. [Footnote: A Roman prelate would doubtless be incapable of commanding an Army Corps with gallantry, as happened more than once in the case of a divisional general who was Minister of Police in Paris, at the time of the Malet conspiracy; but he would never allow himself to be held up so simply as this in his own house. He would be too much afraid of the satirical comment of his colleagues. A Roman who knows himself to be hated always goes about well armed. It has not been thought necessary to give authority for various other slight differences between Parisian and Roman habits of speech and behaviour. So far from minimising these differences, we have felt it our duty to indicate them boldly. The Romans whom we are describing have not the honour to be French.]

Vanina said to him with a charming little air of authority:

“Let us be seated, Monsignore.”

And she took her seat calmly upon a sofa.

“Are you alone, tell me that?” said the Minister.

“Absolutely alone, I swear to you!” cried Vanina.

The Minister took care to verify this assurance: he made a tour of the room and searched everywhere; after which he sat down upon a chair three paces away from Vanina.

“What object could I have,” said Vanina with a calm and winning air, “in attempting the life of a man of moderate views, who would probably be succeeded by some weak hothead, capable of destroying himself and other people?”

“What is your purpose then, Signorina?” said the Minister crossly. “This scene is highly improper and must not continue.”

“What I am going to add,” Vanina went on haughtily, suddenly forgetting her gracious manner, “concerns you rather than myself. The life of the carbonaro Missirilli must be saved: if he is executed, you shall not outlive him by a week. I have no interest in the matter; the foolish action of which you complain was planned, first of all, for my own amusement, and also to oblige one of my friends. I wished,” went on Vanina, resuming her air of good breeding, “to do a service to a man of talent, who will shortly become my uncle, and ought, one would say, to enhance considerably the fame and fortune of his house.” The Minister ceased to appear angry: Vanina’s beauty no doubt contributed to this rapid alteration. Monsignor Catanzara’s fondness for pretty women was well known in Rome, and in her disguise as a footman of the casa Savelli, with close-fitting silk stockings, a red waistcoat, her little sky-blue jacket with its silver braid, and the pistol in her hand, Vanina was irresistible.

“My future niece,” said the Minister, almost laughing, “you are doing a very foolish thing, and it will not be the last.”

“I trust that so wise a person as yourself,” replied Vanina, “will keep my secret, especially from Don Livio; and to bind you, my dear uncle, if you grant me the life of my friend’s favourite, I will give you a kiss.”

It was by continuing the conversation in this half jocular tone, with which Roman ladies know how to discuss the most serious matters, that Vanina succeeded in giving to this interview, begun pistol in hand, the semblance of a visit paid by the young Principessa Savelli to her uncle the Governor of Rome.

Soon Monsignor Catanzara, while rejecting with lofty scorn the idea that he could let himself be influenced by fear, found himself explaining to his niece

all the difficulties that he would meet in trying to save Missirilli's life. As he talked, the Minister strolled up and down the room with Vanina; he took a decanter of lemonade that stood on the mantelpiece and poured some of the liquid into a crystal glass. Just as he was about to raise it to his lips, Vanina took it from him, and, after holding it in her hand for some time, let it fall into the garden, as though by accident. A moment later the Minister took a chocolate drop from a comfit box. Vanina seized it from him, saying with a smile:

"Take care, now; everything in the room is poisoned; for your death was intended. It was I who obtained a reprieve for my future uncle, that I might not enter the house of Cavelli absolutely empty handed."

Monsignor Catanzara, greatly astonished, thanked his niece, and gave her good reason to hope for the life of Missirilli.

"Our bargain is made!" cried Vanina, "and in proof of it, here is your reward," she said, kissing him.

The Minister accepted his reward.

"You must understand, my dear Vanina," he went on, "that I myself do not like bloodshed. Besides, I am still young, though to you perhaps I may appear very old, and I may survive to a time in which blood spilt today will leave a stain."

Two o'clock was striking when Monsignor Catanzara accompanied Vanina to the little gate of his garden.

A couple of days later, when the Minister appeared before the Pope, considerably embarrassed by the action which he had to take, His Holiness began:

"First of all, I have a favour to ask of you. There is one of those carbonari from Forli who is under sentence of death; the thought of him keeps me awake at night: the man's life must be spared."

The Minister, seeing that the Pope had made up his mind, raised a number of objections, and ended by writing out a decree or motu proprio, which the

Pope signed, regardless of precedent.

Vanina had thought that she might perhaps obtain her lover's reprieve, but that an attempt would be made to poison him. The day before, Missirilli had received from the Abate Cari, his confessor, several little packets of ship's biscuit, with a warning not to touch the food supplied by the State.

Having afterwards learned that the carbonari from Forli were to be transferred to the Castle of San Leo, she decided to attempt to see Missirilli as he passed through Città Castellana; she arrived in that town twenty-four hours ahead of the prisoners; there she found the Abate Cari, who had preceded her by several days. He had obtained the concession from the gaoler that Missirilli might hear mass, at midnight, in the prison chapel. This was not all: if Missirilli would consent to have his arms and legs chained together, the gaoler would withdraw to the door of the chapel, in such a way as not to lose sight of the prisoner, for whom he was responsible, but to be out of hearing of anything he might say.

The day which was to decide Vanina's fate dawned at last. As soon as morning came, she shut herself up in the prison chapel. Who could describe the thoughts that disturbed her mind during that long day? Did Missirilli love her sufficiently to forgive her? She had denounced his venuta, but she had saved his life. When reason prevailed in her tormented brain, Vanina hoped that he would consent to leave Italy with her: if she had sinned, it was from excess of love. As four was striking, she heard in the distance, on the cobbled street, the hooves of the carabinieri's horses. The sound of each hoof-beat seemed to strike an echo from her heart. Presently she could make out the rumbling of the carts in which the prisoners were being conveyed. They stopped in the little piazza outside the prison; she saw two carabinieri lift up Missirilli, who was alone on one cart, and so loaded with irons that he could not move. "At least he is alive," she said to herself, the tears welling into her eyes, "they have not poisoned him yet." The evening was agonising; the altar lamp, hanging at a great height, and sparingly supplied with oil by the gaoler, was the only light in the dark chapel. Vanina's eyes strayed over the tombs of various great nobles of the middle ages who had died in the adjoining prison. Their statues wore an air of ferocity.

All sounds had long ceased; Vanina was absorbed in her sombre thoughts. Shortly after midnight had struck, she thought she heard a faint sound, like the fluttering of a bat. She tried to walk, and fell half fainting against the altar rail. At that moment, two spectres appeared close beside her, whom she had not heard come in. They were the gaoler and Missirilli, so loaded with chains as to be almost smothered in them. The gaoler opened a dark lantern which he placed on the altar rail, by Vanina's side, in such a way as to give him a clear view of his prisoner. He then withdrew to the other end of the chapel, by the door. No sooner had the gaoler moved away than Vanina flung herself on Missirilli's bosom. As she clasped him in her arms, she felt only the cold edges of his chains. "To whom does he owe these chains?" was her thought. She felt no pleasure in embracing her lover. This grief was followed by another even more poignant; she fancied for a moment that Missirilli was aware of her crime, so frigid was his greeting.

"Dear friend," he said to her at length, "I regret the affection that you have formed for me; I seek in vain to discover what merit in me has been capable of inspiring it. Let us return, believe me, to more Christian sentiments, let us forget the illusions which hitherto have been leading us astray; I cannot belong to you. The constant misfortune that has dogged my undertakings is due perhaps to the state of mortal sin into which I have so often fallen. To listen only to the counsels of human prudence, why was not I arrested with my friends, on that fatal night at Forli? Why, in the moment of danger, was I not found at my post? Why has my absence then furnished grounds for the most cruel suspicions? I had another passion besides that for the liberation of Italy."

Vanina could not get over her surprise at the change in Missirilli. Without being perceptibly thinner, he had the air of a man of thirty. Vanina attributed this change to the ill treatment which he had undergone in prison, and burst into tears.

"Ah!" she said, "the gaolers promised so faithfully that they would treat you well."

The fact was that at the approach of death all the religious principles consistent with his passion for the liberation of Italy had revived in the heart of the young carbonaro. Gradually Vanina realised that the astonishing

change which she had remarked in her lover was entirely moral, and in no way the effect of bodily ill treatment. Her grief, which she had supposed to have reached its extreme limit, was intensified still further.

Missirilli was silent; Vanina seemed to be on the point of being suffocated by her sobs. He spoke, and himself also appeared slightly moved:

“If I loved any single thing in the world, it would be you, Vanina; but, thanks be to God, I have now but one object in life; I shall die either in prison or in seeking to give Italy freedom.”

Another silence followed; evidently Vanina was incapable of speech: she attempted to speak, but in vain. Missirilli went on:

“Duty is cruel, my friend; but if it were not a little difficult to perform, where would be the heroism? Give me your word that you will not attempt to see me again.”

So far as the chain that was wound tightly about him would allow, he made a slight movement with his wrist and held out his fingers to Vanina.

“If you will accept the advice of one who was once dear to you, be sensible and marry the deserving man whom your father has chosen for you. Do not confide in him anything that may lead to trouble; but, on the other hand, never seek to see me again; let us henceforward be strangers to one another. You have advanced a considerable sum for the service of the Fatherland; if ever it is delivered from its tyrants, that sum will be faithfully repaid to you in national bonds.”

Vanina was crushed. While he was speaking, Pietro’s eve had gleamed only at the moment when he mentioned the Fatherland.

At length pride came to the rescue of the young Princess; she had brought with her a supply of diamonds and small files. Without answering Missirilli, she offered him these.

“I accept from a sense of duty,” he told her, “for I must seek to escape; but I will never see you, I swear it by this latest token of your bounty. Farewell,

Vanina; promise me never to write, never to attempt to see me; leave me wholly to the Fatherland, I am dead to you: farewell."

"No," replied Vanina, grown furious, "I wish you to know what I have done, led on by the love that I bear you."

She then related to him all her activities from the moment when Missirilli had left the villa of San Niccolo to give himself up to the Legate. When her tale was finished:

"All this is nothing," said Vanina: "I have done more, in my love for you."

She then told him of her betrayal.

"Ah, monster," cried Pietro, mad with rage, hurling himself upon her; and sought to crush her to the ground with his chains.

He would have succeeded but for the gaoler, who came running at the sound of her cries. He seized Missirilli.

"There, monster, I will not owe anything to you," said Missirilli to Vanina, flinging at her, as violently as his chains would allow him, the files and diamonds, and he moved rapidly away.

Vanina was left speechless. She returned to Rome: and the newspapers announce that she has just been married to Principe Don Livio Savelli.

THE ABBESS OF CASTRO

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

I

We have so often been shewn in melodrama the Italian brigands of the sixteenth century, and so many people have spoken of them without any real knowledge, that we have come to hold the most erroneous ideas of what they were like. Speaking generally, one may say that these brigands were the Opposition to the vile governments which, in Italy, took the place of the mediaeval Republics. The new tyrant was, as a rule, the wealthiest citizen of the defunct Republic, and, to win over the populace, would adorn the town with splendid churches and fine pictures. Such were the Polentini of Ravenna, the Manfredi of Faenza, the Riario of Imola, the Cani of Verona, the Bentivoglio of Bologna, the Visconti of Milan, and lastly, the least bellicose and most hypocritical of all, the Medici of Florence. Among the historians of these little States none has dared to relate the countless poisonings and assassinations ordered by the fear that used to torment these petty tyrants; these grave historians were in their pay. When you consider that each of these tyrants was personally acquainted with each of the Republicans by whom he knew himself to be execrated (the Tuscan Grand Duke Cosimo, for instance, knew Strozzi), and that several of these tyrants died by the hand of the assassin, you will understand the profound hatreds, the eternal distrust which gave so much spirit and courage to the Italians of the sixteenth century, and such genius to their artists. You will see these profound passions preventing the birth of that really rather absurd prejudice which was called honour in the days of Madame de Sévigné, and consists

first and foremost in sacrificing one's life to serve the master whose subject one is by birth, and to please the ladies. In the sixteenth century, a man's activity and his real worth could not be displayed in France, nor win admiration, except by bravery on the field of battle or in duels; and, as women love bravery, and above all daring, they became the supreme judges of a man's worth. Then was born the spirit of gallantry, which led to the destruction, one after another, of all the passions, including love, in the interests of that cruel tyrant whom we all obey: namely, vanity. Kings protected vanity, and with good reason, hence the power of the riband.

In Italy, a man distinguished himself by all forms of merit, by famous strokes with the sword as by discoveries in ancient manuscripts: take Petrarch, the idol of his time; and a woman of the sixteenth century loved a man who was learned in Greek as well as, if not more than she would have loved a man famous for his martial valour. Then one saw passions, and not the habit of gallantry. That is the great difference between Italy and France, that is why Italy has given birth to a Raphael, a Giorgione, a Titian, a Correggio, while France produced all those gallant captains of the sixteenth century, so entirely forgotten today, albeit each of them had killed so vast a number of enemies.

I ask pardon for these homely truths. However it be, the atrocious and necessary acts of vengeance of the petty Italian tyrants of the middle ages won over the hearts of their peoples to the brigands. The brigands were hated when they stole horses, corn, money, in a word everything that was necessary to support life; but, in their heart of hearts, the people were for them, and the village girls preferred to all the rest the boy who once in his life had been obliged andare alia macchia, that is to say to flee to the woods and take refuge among the brigands, in consequence of some over-rash action.

And even in our own day everyone dreads, unquestionably, an encounter with brigands; but when they are caught and punished everyone is sorry for them. The fact is that this people, so shrewd, so cynical, which laughs at all the publications issued under the official censure of its masters, finds its favourite reading in little poems which narrate with ardour the lives of the most renowned brigands. The heroic element that it finds in these stories thrills the artistic vein that still survives in the lower orders, and besides,

they are so weary of the official praise given to certain people, that everything of this sort which is not official goes straight to the heart. It must be explained that the lower classes in Italy suffer from certain things which the traveller would never observe, were he to live ten years in the country. For instance, fifteen years ago, before governments in their wisdom had suppressed the brigands, [Footnote: Gasparone, the last of the brigands, made terms with the Government in 1826; he was confined in the citadel of Civita–Vecchia with thirty-two of his men. It was the want of water on the heights of the Apennines, where he had taken refuge, that obliged him to make terms. He was a man of spirit, with a face that is not easily forgotten.] it was not uncommon to see certain of their exploits punish the iniquities of the Governors of small towns. These Governors, absolute magistrates whose emoluments do not amount to more than twenty scudi monthly, are naturally at the disposal of the most important family of the place, which by this simple enough method oppresses its enemies. If the brigands did not always succeed in punishing these despotic little Governors, they did at least make fools of them, and defy their authority, which is no small matter in the eyes of this quick-witted race. A satirical sonnet consoles them for all their misfortunes, and never do they forget an injury. That is another fundamental difference between the Italian and the Frenchman.

In the sixteenth century, had the Governor of a township sentenced to death a poor inhabitant who had incurred the hatred of the leading family, one often found brigands attacking the prison in an attempt to set free the victim; on the other hand the powerful family, having no great faith in the nine or ten soldiers of the government who were set to guard the prison, would raise at its own expense a troop of temporary soldiers. These latter, who were known as bravi, would install themselves in the neighbourhood of the prison, and make it their business to escort to the place of execution the poor devil whose death had been bought. If the powerful family included a young man, he would place himself at the head of these improvised soldiers.

This state of civilisation makes morality groan, I admit; in our day we have the duel, dulness, and judges are not bought and sold; but these sixteenth century customs were marvellously well adapted to create men worthy of the name.

Many historians, praised even today in the hack literature of the academies, have sought to conceal this state of affairs, which, about the year 1550, was forming such great characters. At the time, their prudent falsehoods were rewarded with all the honours which the Medici of Florence, the Este of Ferrara, the Viceroys of Naples and so forth had at their disposal. One poor historian, named Giannone, did seek to raise a corner of the veil, but as he ventured only to tell a very small part of the truth, and even then only by using ambiguous and obscure expressions, he made himself extremely tedious, which did not prevent him from dying in prison at the age of eighty-two, on March 7th, 1758.

The first thing to be done, then, if one wishes to learn the history of Italy, is on no account to read the authors generally commended; nowhere has the value of a lie been better appreciated, nowhere has lying been better rewarded. [Footnote: Paolo Giovio, Bishop of Como, Aretino, and a hundred others less amusing, whom the dulness that they diffuse has saved from disrepute, Robertson, Roscoe are full of lies. Guicciardini sold himself to Cosimo I, who treated him with contempt. In our time, Coletta and Pignotti have told the truth, the latter with the constant fear of being disgraced, although he refused to allow his work to be printed until after his death.]

The earliest histories to be written in Italy, after the great wave of barbarism in the ninth century, make mention already of the brigands, and speak of them as though they had existed from time immemorial. (See Muratori's collection.) When, unfortunately for the general welfare, for justice, for good government, but fortunately for the arts, the mediaeval Republics were overthrown, the most energetic among the Republicans, those who loved freedom more than the majority of their fellow-citizens, took refuge in the forests. Naturally a populace harassed by the Baglioni, the Malatesta, the Bentivoglio, the Medici, etc., loved and respected their enemies. The cruelties of the petty tyrants who succeeded the first usurpers, the cruelties, for instance, of Cosimo, the first Duke of Florence, who had the Republicans who had fled to Venice, and even to Paris, slain, furnished recruits to these brigands. To speak only of the times in which our heroine lived, about the year 1550, Alfonso Piccolomini, Duca di Monte Mariano, and Marco Sciarra led with success armed bands which, in the neighbourhood of Albano, used to brave the Pope's soldiers, who at that time were very brave indeed. The line of operations of these famous chiefs, whom the populace still admire,

extended from the Po and the marshes of Ravenna as far as the woods that then covered Vesuvius. The forest of la Faggiola, rendered so famous by their exploits, and situated five leagues from Rome, on the way to Naples, was the headquarters of Sciarra, who, during the Pontificate of Gregory XIII, had often several thousands of men under his command. The detailed history of this illustrious brigand would appear incredible to the present generation, for the reason that no one would ever be able to understand the motives of his actions. He was not defeated until 1592. When he saw that his affairs were in a desperate state, he made terms with the Venetian Republic, and transferred himself to its service, with the most devoted, or most criminal (as you please) of his men. At the request of the Roman Government, Venice, which had signed a treaty with Sciarra, had him put to death, and sent his brave soldiers to defend the Isle of Candia against the Turks. But Venice in her wisdom knew well that a deadly plague was raging in Candia, and in a few days the five hundred soldiers whom Sciarra had brought to the service of the Republic were reduced to sixty-seven.

This forest of la Faggiola, whose giant trees screen and extinct volcano, was the final scene of the exploits of Marco Sciarra. Every traveller will tell you that it is the most impressive spot in that marvellous Roman Campagna, whose sombre aspect appears made for tragedy. It crowns with its dusky verdure the summit of Monte Albano.

It is to a volcanic eruption centuries earlier than the foundation of Rome that we owe this splendid mountain. At an epoch before any of the histories, it rose in the midst of the vast plain which at one time extended from the Apennines to the sea. Monte Cavi, which rises surrounded by the dusky shade of la Faggiola, is its culminating point: it is visible from all sides, from Terracina and Ostia as well as from Rome and Tivoli, and it is the mountain of Albano, covered now with palaces, which closes to the south that Roman horizon so familiar to travellers. A convent of Blackfriars has taken the place, on the summit of Monte Cavi, of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, where the Latin peoples came to sacrifice in common and to confirm the bonds of a sort of religious federation. Protected by the shade of magnificent chestnuts, the traveller arrives after some hours at the enormous blocks which mark the ruins of the temple of Jupiter; but beneath this dark shade, so delicious in that climate, even today, the traveller peers anxiously into the depths of the forest; he is afraid of brigands. On reaching the summit of

Monte Cavi, we light a fire in the ruins of the temple, to prepare our meal. From this point, which commands the whole of the Roman Campagna, we perceive, to the west of us, the sea, which seems to be within a stone's throw, although three or four leagues away; we can distinguish the smallest vessels; with the least powerful glass, we can count the people who are journeying to Naples on board the steamer. To all the other points of the compass, the view extends over a magnificent plain, which is bounded on the east by the Apennines above Palestrina, and to the north by Saint Peter's and the other great buildings of Rome. Monte Cavi being of no great height, the eye can make out the minutest details of this sublime landscape, which might well dispense with any historical association, and yet every clump of trees, every fragment of ruined wall, catching the eye in the plain or on the slopes of the mountain, recalls one of those battles, so admirable for their patriotism and their valour, which Livy has put on record.

And we today can still follow, on our way to the enormous blocks, the remains of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, which serve as a wall to the garden of the Blackfriars, the triumphal road travelled long ago by the first Kings of Rome. It is paved with stones cut with great regularity; and, in the middle of the forest of la Faggiola, we come upon long sections of it.

On the lip of the crater which, filled now with clear water, has become the charming lake of Albano, five or six miles in circumference, so deeply embedded in its socket of lava, stood Alba, the mother of Rome, which Roman policy destroyed in the days of the first kings. Its ruins, however, still exist. Some centuries later, a quarter of a league from Alba, on the slope of the mountain that faces the sea, arose Albano, the modern city; but it is divided from the lake by a screen of rocks which hide the lake from the city and the city from the lake. When one sees it from the plain, its white buildings stand out against the dark, profound verdure of the forest so dear to the brigands and so often made famous, which crowns the volcanic mountain on every side.

Albano, which numbers today five or six thousand inhabitants, had not three thousand in 1540, when there flourished, in the highest rank of the nobility, the powerful family of Campireali, whose misfortunes we are about to relate.

I translate this story from two bulky manuscripts, one Roman, the other Florentine. At great risk to myself, I have ventured to reproduce their style, which is more or less that of our old legends. So fine and restrained a style as is fashionable at the present day would, I feel, have been too little in keeping with the events recorded, and less still with the reflexions of the writers. They wrote about the year 1598. I crave the reader's indulgence as well for them as for myself.

II

"Having committed to writing so many tragic histories," says the author of the Florentine manuscript, "I shall conclude with that one which, among them all, it most pains me to relate. I am going to speak of that famous Abbess of the Convent of the Visitation at Castro, Elena de' Campireali, whose trial and death caused so great a stir in the high society of Rome and of Italy. As far back as 1555, brigands reigned in the neighbourhood of Rome, the magistrates were sold to the powerful families. In the year 1572, which was that of the trial, Gregory XIII, Buoncompagni, ascended the Throne of Saint Peter. This holy pontiff combined all the apostolic virtues but has been blamed for a certain weakness in his civil government: he was unable either to select honest judges or to suppress the brigands; he burdened his soul with crimes which he could not punish. He felt that, in inflicting the death penalty, he was taking upon himself a terrible responsibility. The result of this attitude was to people with an almost innumerable host of brigands the roads that lead to the eternal city. To travel with any security, one had to be a friend of the brigands. The forest of la Faggiola, lying astride of the road that runs to Naples by Albano, had long been the headquarters of a government unfriendly to that of His Holiness, and on several occasions Rome was obliged to treat, as one power with another, with Marco Sciarra, one of the kings of the forest. What gave these brigands their strength was that they had endeared themselves to their peasant neighbours.

"This charming town of Albano, so close to the brigand headquarters, witnessed the birth, in 1542, of Elena de' Campireali. Her father was

reckoned the wealthiest patrician of the district, and in this capacity had married Vittoria Carafa, who owned a large estate in the Kingdom of Naples. I could name several old men still living who knew both Vittoria Carafa and her daughter quite well. Vittoria was a model of prudence and sense; but despite all her cleverness she could not avert the ruin of her family. And this is curious: the terrible misfortunes which are to form the melancholy subject of my story cannot, it seems to me, be ascribed especially to any of the actors whom I am going to present to the reader: I see people who are unfortunate, but truly I cannot find any that are to be blamed. The extreme beauty and tender heart of the young Elena were two great perils for her, and form an excuse for Giulio Branciforte, her lover, just as the absolute want of sense of Monsignor Cittadini, Bishop of Castro, may excuse him also up to a certain point. He had owed his rapid advancement in the scale of ecclesiastical dignities to the honesty of his conduct, and above all to the most noble bearing and most regularly handsome features that one could hope to meet. I find it written of him that one could not set eyes on him without loving him.

“As I do not wish to flatter anyone, I shall make no attempt to conceal the fact that a holy friar of the Convent of Monte Cavi, who had often been surprised, in his cell, floating at a height of several feet from the ground, like Saint Paul, when nothing but divine grace could maintain him in that extraordinary posture, [Footnote: Even today, this singular position is regarded by the populace of the Roman Campagna as a sure sign of sanctity. About the year 1826, a monk of Albano was seen many times raised from the ground by divine grace. Many miracles were ascribed to him; people came from a radius of twenty leagues to receive his blessing; women, belonging to the highest ranks of society, had seen him floating in his cell three feet from the ground. Suddenly he vanished.] had prophesied to Signor de’ Campireali that his family would be extinguished with him, and that he would have but two children, each of whom was to perish by a violent death. It was on account of this prophecy that he could find no one to marry in the district, and went to seek his fortune at Naples, where he was lucky enough to find great possessions and a wife capable, by her intelligence, of averting his evil destiny, had such a thing been possible. This Signor de’ Campireali was considered a most honourable man, and dispensed charity lavishly; but he lacked spirit, which meant that gradually he withdrew from the annual visit to Rome, and ended by passing almost the whole year in his palazzo at

Albano. He devoted himself to the cultivation of his estates, situated in that rich plain which extends from the city to the sea. On the advice of his wife, he caused the most splendid education to be given to his son Fabio, a young man extremely proud of his birth, and his daughter Elena, who was a marvel of beauty, as may be seen to this day from her portrait, which is preserved in the Farnese collection. Since I began to write her history I have gone to the palazzo Farnese to consider the mortal envelope which heaven had bestowed upon this woman, whose grim destiny caused so much stir in her own time, and even now still finds a place in human memory. The shape of the head is an elongated oval, the brow is very large, the hair of a dark gold. Her general air is on the whole one of gaiety; she had large eyes with a profound expression, and chestnut eyebrows that formed a perfectly traced arch. The lips are very thin, and you would say that the lines of her mouth had been drawn by the famous painter Correggio. Viewed amid the portraits which hang on either side of hers in the Farnese gallery, she has the air of a queen. It is very seldom that an air of gaiety is found in combination with majesty.

“Having spent eight whole years as a boarder in the Convent of the Visitation in the town of Castro, now destroyed, to which, in those days, the majority of the Roman princes sent their daughters, Elena returned to her home, but did not leave the convent without first making an oblation of a splendid chalice to the high altar of the church. No sooner had she returned to Albano than her father summoned from Rome, at a considerable salary, the celebrated poet Cecchino, then a man of great age; he enriched Elena’s mind with the finest passages of the divine Virgil, and of Petrarch, Ariosto and Dante, his famous disciples.”

Here the translator is obliged to omit a long dissertation on the varying degrees of fame which the sixteenth century assigned to these great poets. It would appear that Elena knew Latin. The poetry that she was made to learn spoke of love, and of a love that would seem to us highly ridiculous, were we to come across it in 1839; I mean the passionate love that feeds on great sacrifices, that can exist only when wrapped in mystery, and borders always on the most dreadful calamities.

Such was the love that was inspired in Elena, then barely seventeen, by Giulio Branciforte. He was one of her neighbours, and very poor; he lived in a wretched house built on the side of the mountain, a quarter of a league

from the town, amid the ruins of Alba, and on the edge of the precipice of one hundred and fifty feet, screened with foliage, which surrounds the lake. This house, which stood within the sombre and splendid shade of the forest of la Faggiola, was afterwards demolished, when the convent of Palazzuola was built. The poor young man had no advantages beyond his lively and light-hearted manner and the unfeigned indifference with which he endured his misfortunes. The most that could be said in his favour was that his face was expressive without being handsome. But he was understood to have fought gallantly under the command of Prince Colonna, and among his bravi, in two or three highly dangerous enterprises. Despite his poverty, despite his want of good looks, he possessed nevertheless, in the eyes of all the young women of Albano, the heart that it would have been most gratifying to win. Well received everywhere, Giulio Branciforte had made none but the easiest conquests, until the moment when Elena returned from the convent of Castro. “When, shortly afterwards, the great poet Cecchino moved from Rome to the palazzo Campireali, to teach the girl literature, Giulio, who knew him, sent him a set of Latin verses on the good fortune that had befallen him in his old age, in seeing so fine a pair of eyes fastened upon his own, and so pure a heart become perfectly happy when he deigned to bestow his approval upon its thoughts. The jealousy and disgust of the girls to whom Giulio had been paying attention before Elena’s return soon rendered vain every precaution that he might take to conceal a dawning passion, and I must confess that this affair between a young man of two and twenty and a girl of seventeen was carried on in a fashion of which prudence could not approve. Three months had not gone by before Signer de’ Campireali observed that Giulio Branciforte was in the habit of passing unduly often beneath the windows of his palazzo (which is still to be seen about half way along the high road that leads up to the lake).”

Freedom of speech and rudeness, natural consequences of the liberty which Republics tolerate, and the habit of giving way to passions not yet subdued by the manners of a monarchy appear unconcealed in the first steps taken by Signer de’ Campireali. On the very day on which he had taken offence at the frequent appearance of young Branci-forte, he addressed him in these terms:

“How is it you dare loiter about like this all day in front of my house, and have the impertinence to stare up at my daughter’s windows, you who have not even a coat to your back? Were I not afraid that such an action might be

misinterpreted by my neighbours, I should give you three gold sequins, and you would go to Rome and buy yourself a more decent jacket. At any rate my eyes and my daughter's would not be offended any more by the sight of your rags."

Elena's father no doubt exaggerated: young Branci-forte's clothes were by no means rags; they were made of the plainest materials; but, although spotlessly clean and often brushed, it must be admitted that their appearance betokened long wear. Giulio was so cut to the heart by Signor Campireali's reproaches that he ceased to appear by day outside his house.

As we have said, the two lines of arches, remains of an ancient aqueduct, which formed the main walls of the house built by Branciforte's father and left by him to his son, were no more than five or six hundred yards from Albano. In coming down from this higher ground to the modern city, Giulio was obliged to pass by the palazzo Campireali. Elena soon remarked the absence of the singular young man who, her friends told her, had abandoned all other society in order to consecrate himself wholly to the pleasure which he appeared to find in gazing at her.

One summer evening, towards midnight, Elena's window stood open, the girl herself was enjoying the sea breeze which makes itself felt quite distinctly on the hillside of Albano, albeit the town is divided from the sea by a plain three leagues in width. The night was dark, the silence profound; one could have heard a leaf fall to the ground. Elena, leaning upon her window sill, may have been thinking of Giulio, when she caught sight of something like the soundless wing of a nocturnal bird which passed gently to and fro close to her window. She drew back in alarm. It never occurred to her that this object might be being held up by some passer-by: the second storey of the palazzo, from which her window looked, was more than fifty feet from the ground. Suddenly she thought she identified a bunch of flowers in this strange article which amid a profound silence kept passing to and fro outside the window on the sill of which she was leaning; her heart beat violently. These flowers appeared to her to be fastened to the extremity of two or three of those canne, a large kind of reed not unlike the bamboo, which grow in the Roman Campagna, and send up shoots to a height of twenty or thirty feet. The flexibility of the reeds and the strength of the breeze made it difficult for Giulio to keep his nosegay exactly opposite the

window from which he supposed that Elena might be looking out, and besides, the night was so dark that from the street one could make out nothing at that height. Standing motionless inside her window, Elena was deeply stirred. To take these flowers, would not that be an admission? Not that she experienced any of the feelings to which an adventure of this sort would give rise, in our day, in a girl of the best society prepared for life by a thorough education. As her father and her brother Fabio were in the house, her first thought was that the least sound would be followed by a shot from an arquebus aimed at Giulio; she was moved to pity by the risk which that poor young man was running. Her second thought was that, although she as yet knew him very slightly, he was nevertheless the person she loved best in the world after her own family. At length, after hesitating for some minutes, she took the nosegay, and, as she touched the flowers in the intense darkness, could feel that a note was tied to the stem of one of them; she ran to the great staircase to read this note by the light of the lamp that burned before the image of the Madonna. “How rash!” she said to herself when the opening lines had made her blush with joy; “If anyone sees me, I am lost, and my family will persecute that poor young man for ever.” She returned to her room and lighted the lamp. This was an exquisite moment for Giulio, who, ashamed of his action and as though to hide himself even in the pitch darkness, had flattened himself against the enormous trunk of one of those weirdly shaped evergreen oaks which are still to be seen opposite the palazzo Campireali.

In his letter Giulio related with the most perfect simplicity the crushing reprimand that had been addressed to him by Elena’s father. “I am poor, it is true,” he went on, “and you would find it hard to imagine the whole extent of my poverty. I have only my house which you may have observed beneath the ruins of the Alban aqueduct; round the house is a garden which I cultivate myself, and live upon its produce. I also possess a vineyard which is leased at thirty scudi a year. I do not know, really, why I love you; certainly I cannot suggest that you should come and share my poverty. And yet, if you do not love me, life has no further value for me; it is useless to tell you that I would give it a thousand times over for you. And yet, before your return from the convent, that life was by no means wretched; on the contrary, it was filled with the most dazzling dreams. So that I can say that the sight of happiness has made me unhappy. To be sure, no one in the world would then have dared to say the things to me with which your father lashed me; my

dagger would have done him prompt justice. Then, with my courage and my weapons, I reckoned myself a match for anyone; I wanted nothing. Now it is all altered: I have known fear. I have written too much; perhaps you despise me. If, on the other hand, you have any pity for me, in spite of the poor clothes that cover me, you will observe that every night, when twelve strikes from the Capuchin convent at the top of the hill, I am hiding beneath the great oak, opposite the window at which I never cease to gaze, because I suppose it to be that of your room. If you do not despise me as your father does, throw me down one of the flowers from your nosegay, but take care that it is not caught on one of the cornices, or on one of the balconies of your palazzo."

This letter was read many times; gradually Elena's eyes filled with tears; she tenderly examined this splendid nosegay, the flowers of which were tied together with a strong silken cord. She tried to pull out a flower, but failed; then she was seized with remorse. Among Roman girls, to pull out a flower, to damage in any way a nosegay given in love, means risking the death of that love. Fearing lest Giulio might be growing impatient, she ran to her window; but, on reaching it, suddenly reflected that she was too easily visible, the lamp flooding the room with light. Elena could not think what signal she might allow herself to give; it seemed as though there were none that did not say a great deal too much.

Covered with shame, she ran back into her room. But time was flying; suddenly an idea occurred to her which threw her into unspeakable confusion: Giulio would think that, like her father, she despised his poverty! She saw a little specimen of a precious marble lying on her table, tied it in her handkerchief and threw the handkerchief down to the foot of the oak opposite her window. She then made a sign that he was to go; she heard Giulio obey her; for, as he went away, he no longer sought to muffle the sound of his step. When he had reached the summit of the girdle of rocks which separates the lake from the last houses of Albano, she heard him singing words of love; she made him signals of farewell, this time less timid, then began to read his letter again.

The following evening, and every evening after this there were similar letters and assignations; but as everything is observed in an Italian village, and as Elena was by far the greatest heiress in the place, Signor de' Campireali was

informed that every evening, after midnight, a light was seen in his daughter's room; and, what was far more extraordinary, the window was open, and indeed Elena stood there as though she were in no fear of zanzare (an extremely troublesome kind of midge, which greatly spoils the fine evenings in the Roman Campagna. Here I must once again crave the reader's indulgence. When one is trying to understand the ways of foreign countries, one must expect to find very grim ideas, very different from our own). Signor de' Campireali made ready his own arquebus and his son's. That evening, as the clock struck a quarter to twelve, he called Fabio, and the two stole out, making as little sound as possible, on to a great stone balcony which projected from the first floor of the palazzo immediately beneath Elena's window. The massive pillars of the stone balustrade gave them breast-high cover from the fire of any arquebus that might be aimed at them from without. Midnight struck; father and son could hear quite distinctly a slight sound from beneath the trees which bordered the street opposite their palazzo; but, and this filled them with surprise, no light appeared at Elena's window. This girl, so simple until then, and' to all appearances a child, from the spontaneity of her movements, had changed in character since she had been in love. She knew that the slightest imprudence jeopardised her lover's life; if a gentleman of the importance of her father killed a poor man like Giulio Branciforte, he could clear himself by disappearing for three months, which he would spend at Naples; during that time, hie friends in Rome would settle the matter, and all would be ended with the offer of a silver lamp costing some hundreds of scudi to the altar of the Madonna in fashion at the moment. That day, at luncheon, Elena had read on her father's features that he had some grave cause for anger, and, from the way in which he watched her when he thought that he was not observed, she concluded that she herself was largely responsible for this anger. She went at once and sprinkled a little dust on the stocks of the five splendid arquebuses which her father kept hanging by his bed. She covered also with a fine layer of dust his swords and daggers. All day she shewed a wild gaiety, running incessantly from top to bottom of the house; at every moment she went to the windows, quite determined to make Giulio a negative signal, should she be so fortunate as to catch sight of him. But there was no chance of that: the poor fellow had been so profoundly humiliated by the onslaught made on him by the rich Signer de' Campireali, that by day he never appeared in Albano; duty alone brought him there on Sundays to the parochial mass. Elena's mother, who adored her and could refuse her nothing, went out with her

three times that day, but all in vain: Elena saw no sign of Giulio. She was in despair. What were her feelings when, on going towards nightfall to examine her father's weapons, she saw that two arquebuses had been loaded, and that almost all the swords and daggers had been handled. She was distracted from her mortal anxiety only by the extreme care she took to appear to suspect nothing. On retiring to bed at ten o'clock, she turned the key in the door of her room, which opened into her mother's ante-room, then remained glued to her window, leaning upon the sill in such a way as not to be visible from without. One may judge of the anxiety with which she heard the hours strike: it was no longer a question of the reproaches which she often heaped on herself for the rapidity with which she had attached herself to Giulio, which might render her less worthy in his eyes of love. This day did more to strengthen the young man's position than six months of constancy and protestations. "What is the use of lying?" Elena said to herself. "Do I not love him with all my heart and soul?"

At half past eleven she saw quite plainly her father and brother ambush themselves on the great stone balcony beneath her window. A minute or two after midnight had sounded from the Capuchin convent, she heard quite plainly also the step of her lover, who stopped beneath the great oak; she noticed with joy that her father and brother seemed to have heard nothing: it required the anxiety of love to distinguish so faint a sound.

"Now," she said to herself, "they are going to kill me, but at all costs they must not intercept this evening's letter, they would persecute my poor Giulio for ever." She made the sign of the Cross, and, holding on with one hand to the iron balcony of her window, leaned out, thrusting herself as far forward as possible over the street. Not a quarter of a minute had passed when the nosegay, fastened as usual to a long cane, came brushing against her arms. She seized the nosegay, but, as she wrenched it vigorously from the cane to the end of which it was tied, she caused the said cane to strike against the stone balcony. At once two arquebus shots rang out, followed by complete silence. Her brother Fabio, not knowing, in the darkness, whether what was tapping violently against the balcony might not be a cord with the help of which Giulio was climbing down from his sister's room, had fired at her balcony; next day she found the mark of the bullet, which had flattened itself against the iron. Signer de' Campireali had fired into the street, beneath the stone balcony, for Giulio had made some noise in catching the cane as it fell.

Giulio, for his part, hearing a noise above his head, had guessed what would follow, and had taken cover beneath the projection of the balcony.

Fabio quickly reloaded his arquebus, and, heedless of anything that his father might say, ran to the garden of the house, quietly opened a little door which gave on one of the adjoining streets and stole out on tiptoe to see for himself who the people were that were walking beneath the balcony of the palazzo. At that moment Giulio who, this evening, was well escorted, was within twenty paces of him, flattened against a tree. Elena, leaning from her balcony and trembling for her lover, at once began a conversation at the top of her voice with her brother, whom she could hear moving in the street; she asked him if he had killed the robbers.

“Do not imagine that I am taken in by your wicked tricks!” he called up to her from the street which he was exploring in every direction, “but prepare your tears, I am going to kill the insolent wretch who dares to approach your window.”

No sooner had these words been uttered than Elena heard her mother knock at the door of her room.

She made haste to open it, saying that she could not conceive how the door had come to be locked.

“No make-believe with me, my dear angel,” her mother told her; “your father is furious, and will perhaps kill you: come and lie down with me in my bed; and, if you have a letter, give it to me, I will hide it.”

Elena said to her:

“Here is the nosegay; the letter is hidden among the flowers.”

Scarcely were mother and daughter in bed, when Signer de’ Campireali entered his wife’s room; he came from her oratory, to which he had paid a visit, overturning everything in it. What impressed Elena. was that her father, pale as a spectre, was acting in a slow, deliberate fashion, like a man who has entirely made up his mind. “I am as good as dead!” she said to herself.

“We rejoice that we have children,” said her father as he passed by his wife’s bed on his way to his daughter’s room, trembling with rage, but affecting a perfect calm; “we rejoice that we have children, we ought rather to shed tears of blood when those children are girls. Great God! Is it indeed possible! Their loose conduct is capable of destroying the honour of a man who in sixty years has never given anyone the slightest hold over him.”

So saying, he passed into his daughter’s room.

“I am lost,” Elena told her mother, “the letters are beneath the pedestal of the crucifix, beside the window.”

At once the mother sprang out of bed and ran after her husband; she shouted out to him the most senseless things imaginable, to stimulate his anger; in this she was entirely successful. The old man became furious, he broke everything in his daughter’s room; but the mother was able to remove the letters unobserved. An hour later, when Signor de’ Campireali had returned to his own room next door to his wife’s, and all was quiet in the house, the mother said to her daughter:

“Here are your letters, I have no wish to read them, you see what they might have cost us! If I were you, I would burn them. Good night, kiss me.”

Elena returned to her own room, dissolved in tears; it seemed to her that, after these words from her mother, she no longer loved Giulio. Then she made ready to burn his letters; but, before destroying them, could not refrain from reading them again. She read them so carefully and so often that the sun was already high in the heavens when at length she determined to listen to the voice of reason.

On the following day, which was a Sunday, Elena walked to the parish church with her mother; fortunately, her father did not follow them. The first person on whom her eyes fell in church was Giulio Branciforte. A glance at him assured her that he was not injured. Her happiness knew no bounds; the events of the night were a million leagues away from her memory. She had prepared five or six little notes scribbled on old scraps of paper stained with a mixture of earth and water, such as might naturally be found lying on the floor of a church; each of these ‘notes contained the same warning:

“They have discovered all, except his name. He must not appear again in the street; a certain person will come here often.”

Elena let fall one of these scraps of paper; a glance was sufficient to warn Giulio, who picked it up and vanished. On her return home, an hour later, she found on the great staircase of the palazzo a fragment of paper which attracted her attention by its exact resemblance to those of which she had made use that morning. She took possession of it, without even her mother’s noticing anything; and read:

“In three days he will return from Rome, where he is forced to go. There will be singing by daylight, on market-days, above the din made by the peasants, about ten o’clock.”

This departure for Rome seemed to Elena strange. “Does it mean that he is afraid of my brother’s arquebus?” she asked herself sadly. Love pardons everything, except a deliberate absence; that being the worst of tortures. Instead of passing in a delightful dream and being wholly occupied in weighing the reasons that one has for loving one’s lover, life is then agitated by cruel doubts. “But, after all, can I believe that he no longer loves me?” Elena asked herself during the three long days of Branciforte’s absence. Suddenly her grief gave way to a wild joy: on the third day, she saw him appear in the full light of noon, strolling in the street in front of her father’s palazzo. He was wearing new, almost grand clothes. Never had the nobility of his bearing and the gay and courageous simplicity of his features shone to better advantage; never either, before that day, had there been so much talk in Albano of Giulio’s poverty. It was the men, the young men especially, who repeated that cruel word; the women, and especially the girls, never wearied in their praises of his fine appearance.

Giulio spent the whole day walking about the town; he appeared to be making up for the months of seclusion to which his poverty had condemned him. As befits a man in love, Giulio was well armed beneath his new tunic. Apart from his dirk and dagger, he had put on his giacco (a sort of long waistcoat of chain mail, extremely uncomfortable to wear, but a cure, to these Italian hearts, for a sad malady, the piercing attacks of which were incessantly felt in that age, I mean the fear of being killed at the street corner by one of the enemies one knew oneself to have). On the day in question,

Giulio hoped for a glimpse of Elena, and moreover felt some repugnance at the thought of being left to his own company in his lonely house: for the following reason. Banuccio, an old soldier of his father, after having served with him in ten campaigns in the troops of various condottieri, and finally in those of Marco Sciarra, had followed his captain when the latter's wounds forced him to retire. Captain Branciforte had reasons for not living in Rome: he was exposed there to the risk of meeting the sons of men whom he had killed; even at Albano, he was by no means anxious to place himself entirely at the mercy of constituted authority. Instead of buying or leasing a house in the town, he preferred to build one so situated that its occupant could see visitors approaching a long way off. He found amid the ruins of Alba an admirable site: one could, unobserved by indiscreet visitors, slip away into the forest where ruled his old friend and patron, Prince Fabrizio Colonna. Captain Branciforte gave no thought to his son's future. When he retired from the service, only fifty years old, but riddled with wounds, he calculated that he had still some ten years of life, and, having built his house, spent every year a tenth part of what he had collected in the lootings of towns and villages in which he had had the honour to take part.

He purchased the vineyard which brought in a rental of thirty scudi to his son as a retort to the sneer of a burgess of Albano, who had said to him, one day when he was disputing hotly over the interests and honour of the town, that it was evidently right and proper for so rich a proprietor as himself to give advice to the ansioni of Albano. The captain bought the vineyard, and announced that he would buy any number more: then, meeting his critic in a solitary place, killed him with a pistol shot.

After eight years of this sort of life, the captain died; his supporter Ranuccio adored Giulio; nevertheless, weary of idleness, he took service once again in Prince Colonna's band. He often came to see his son Giulio, for so he called him, and, on the eve of a perilous assault which the Prince was about to face in his fortress of la Petrella, he had taken Giulio with him to fight. Finding him to be extremely brave:

"You must be mad," he told him, "and very easily satisfied, to be living on the outskirts of Albano like the humblest and poorest of its inhabitants, when with what I have seen you do and your father's name you might be a brilliant soldier of fortune among us, and, what is more, make your fortune."

Giulio was tormented by these words; he knew the Latin that had been taught him by a priest, but, as his father had always laughed at everything that the priest said apart from his Latin, he had absolutely no education. At the same time, despised for his poverty, isolated in his lonely house, he had acquired a certain common-sense which, by its boldness, would have astonished men of learning. For instance, before falling in love with Elena, and without knowing why, he loved war, but he felt a repugnance towards pillage, which, in the eyes of his father the captain and of Ranuccio, was like the short play intended to raise a laugh which follows the noble tragedy. Since he had been in love with Elena, this commonsense, the fruit of his solitary reflexions, had been torturing Giulio. So light-hearted before, he now dared not consult anyone as to his doubts, his heart was full of passion and misery. What would not Signer de' Campireali say if he knew him to be a soldier of fortune? This time, his reproaches would not be without foundation! Giulio had always reckoned upon the military profession, as a sure resource when he should have spent the price of the gold chains and other jewels which he had found in his father's strong-box. If Giulio had no scruple as to carrying off (he, so poor) the daughter of the rich Signor de' Campireali, it was because in those days fathers disposed of their property after their death as they pleased, and Signor de' Campireali might very well leave his daughter a thousand scudi as her entire fortune. Another problem kept Giulio's imagination closely occupied: first of all, in what city should he install young Elena after he had married her and carried her off from her father? Secondly, with what money was he to support her?

When Signor de' Campireali addressed to him that stinging reproach which he had felt so keenly, Giulio remained for two days a victim to the most violent rage and grief; he could not make up his mind either to kill the insolent old man, or to let him live. He passed whole nights in tears; at length he decided to consult Ranuccio, the one friend that he had in the world; but would that friend understand him? It was in vain that he sought for Ranuccio throughout the forest of la Faggiola, he was obliged to take the road to Naples, past Velletri, where Ranuccio was in command of an ambuscade: he was waiting there, with a large company, for Ruiz d'Avalos, a Spanish General, who was proceeding to Rome by land, forgetting that, not long since, before a large audience, he had spoken with contempt of the soldiers of fortune of the Colonna band. His chaplain reminded him most

opportunely of this little circumstance, and Ruiz d'Avalos decided to charter a vessel and to approach Rome by sea.

As soon as Captain Ranuccio had heard Giulio's story:

"Describe to me exactly," he said to him, "the person of this Signer de' Campireali, that his imprudence may not cost the life of some worthy inhabitant of Albano. As soon as the business that is keeping us here is brought to an end one way or the other, you will take yourself off to Rome, where you will take care to shew yourself in the inns and other public places at all hours of the day; you must not let anyone suspect you, on account of your love for the daughter."

Giulio had great difficulty in calming the anger of his father's old comrade. He was obliged to lose his temper.

"Do you suppose that I am asking you for your sword?" he said finally. "Surely I have a sword, myself! I ask you for good advice."

Ranuccio ended every speech with these words:

"You are young, you have no wounds; the insult was public: a man who has lost his honour is despised, even by women."

Giulio told him that he desired time for further reflexion as to what his heart wished, and despite the protestations of Ranuccio, who was quite determined that he should take part in the attack upon the Spanish General's escort, where, he said, there would be honour to be won, not to mention the doubloons, Giulio returned alone to his little house. It was there that, the day before that on which Signor de' Campireali fired an arquebus at him, he had entertained Ranuccio and his corporal, who had come there from the neighbourhood of Velletri. Ranuccio employed force to open the little iron strong box in which his patron, Captain Branciforte, used to lock up the gold chains and other jewels which he did not choose to convert into cash immediately after an expedition. He found in it two scudi.

"I advise you to become a monk," he said to Giulio, "you have all the necessary virtues: love of poverty, here is a proof of it; humility, you allow

yourself to be blackguarded in the public street by a rich townsman of Albano; you want only hypocrisy and gluttony."

Ranuccio insisted on putting fifty doubloons into the iron box.

"I give you my word," he said to Giulio, "that if within a month from today Signor de' Campireali is not buried with all the honours due to his nobility and wealth, my corporal here present will come with thirty men to pull down your little house and burn your wretched furniture. Captain Branciforte's son must not cut a poor figure in this world, on the strength of being in love."

When Signor de' Campireali and his son fired the two shots from their arquebuses, Ranuccio and the corporal had taken up their position beneath the stone balcony, and Giulio had the greatest possible difficulty in restraining them from killing Fabio, when that young man made an imprudent sally through the garden, as we have already related. The argument that calmed Ranuccio was as follows: it is not right to kill a young man who may grow up and become of use in the world, while there exists an aged sinner more guilty than he, and fit only to fill a grave. The day after this adventure, Ranuccio disappeared into the forest, and Giulio set out for Rome. The joy which he felt in buying fine clothes with the doubloons which Ranuccio had given him, was cruelly marred by an idea quite extraordinary for that time, and one that foreboded the exalted destiny that was in store for him: he kept saying to himself: "Elena must be told who I am." Any other man of his age and period would have thought only of enjoying his love and carrying off Elena, without asking himself for a moment what was to become of her in six months' time, any more than what opinion she would form of himself.

On his return to Albano, and on the afternoon of the day on which he displayed before the eyes of all the town the fine clothes that he had brought back from Rome, Giulio learned from old Scotti, his friend, that Fabio had left the town on horseback, on a journey of three leagues to a property which his father owned in the plain, by the sea-coast. Later in the day, he saw Signor de' Campireali, accompanied by two priests, take the road leading to the magnificent avenue of evergreen oaks that crowns the edge of the crater in which the lake of Albano lies. Ten minutes later, an old woman boldly made her way into the palazzo de' Campireali, on the pretext of offering

some fine fruit for sale; the first person that she met was the little maid Marietta, the confidential friend of her mistress Elena, who blushed to the whites of her eyes on receiving a fine nosegay. The letter concealed in the nosegay was of a preposterous length: Giulio related all his feelings since the night of the arquebus-shots; but, by a very singular piece of modesty, did not venture to confess what any other young man of his day would have been so proud to make known, namely that he was the son of a Captain famous for his adventures, and that he himself had already given proof of his valour in more than one combat. He felt that he could hear the reflexions which these deeds would inspire in old Campireali. It must be understood that in the sixteenth century the young women, their outlook being more akin to republican commonsense, esteemed a man far more highly for what he had done himself than for the riches amassed by his fathers or for their famous deeds. But it was principally the young women of humble birth that entertained these ideas. Those who belonged to the rich or noble class were afraid of the brigands, and, as is natural, had a great regard for nobility and opulence. Giulio ended his letter with the words: “I do not know whether the more becoming clothes which I have brought back from Rome have made you forget the cruel insult that a person whom you respect addressed to me recently, with regard to my shabby appearance; I could have avenged myself, I ought to have done so, my honour commanded it; I refrained in consideration of the tears which my revenge would have brought to a pair of eyes that I adore. This may prove to you, if, unfortunately for me, you should still doubt it, that one can be extremely poor and yet have noble feelings. Apart from this, I have to reveal to you a terrible secret; I should certainly find no difficulty in telling it to any other woman; but somehow I shudder when I think of making it known to you. It is capable of destroying, in an instant, the love that you feel for me; no protestation on your part would satisfy me. I wish to read in your eyes the effect that this admission will produce. One of these days, at nightfall, I shall see you in the garden that lies behind the palazzo. That day, Fabio and your father will be away from home; when I have made certain that, notwithstanding their contempt for a poor and ill dressed young man, they cannot deprive us of three quarters of an hour or an hour of conversation, a man will appear beneath the windows of your palazzo, who will be shewing a tame fox to the village children. Later, when the Angélus rings, you will hear a shot fired from an arquebus in the distance; at that moment, go across to the wall of your garden, and, if you are not alone, sing. If all is silent, your slave will appear,

trembling, at your feet, and will tell you things which will perhaps fill you with horror. Until that decisive day comes, a terrible day for me, I shall not take the risk again of offering you a nosegay at midnight; but about two o'clock in the morning I shall go by singing, and perhaps, watching from the great stone balcony, you will let fall a flower plucked by you in your garden. These may be the last signs of affection that you will give to the unhappy Giulio."

Three days after this, Elena's father and brother had gone on their horses to the property which they owned by the seashore; they were to start back shortly before sunset, so as to reach home about two o'clock in the morning. But, when the time came for them to take the road, not only their own two horses but every horse on the farm had disappeared. Greatly astonished by this audacious robbery, they hunted for their horses, which were not found until the following day in the forest of tall trees which lines the shore. The two Campireali, father and son, were obliged to return to Albano in a country cart drawn by oxen.

That evening, when Giulio was at Elena's feet, it was almost quite dark, and the poor girl was very glad of the darkness: she was appearing for the first time before this man whom she loved tenderly, who knew very well that she loved him, but to whom after all she had never yet spoken.

One thing that she noticed restored a little of her courage: Giulio was paler and trembled more than she. She saw him at her knees: "Truly, I am not in a fit state to speak," he said to her. There followed some moments, apparently of great happiness; they gazed at one another, but without the power to utter a single word, motionless as a group wrought in marble, but a group full of expression. Giulio was on his knees, holding one of Elena's hands; she, with bent head, was studying him attentively.

Giulio knew well that, following the advice of his friends, the young debauchees of Rome, he ought to have made some attempt; but the idea horrified him. He was aroused from this state of ecstasy and, perhaps, of the keenest happiness that love can give, by this thought: the time was passing rapidly, the Campireali were drawing near their palazzo. He realised that with so scrupulous a nature as his he could not find any lasting happiness so

long as he had not made to his mistress that terrible admission which would have seemed to his Roman friends so dense a piece of stupidity.

“I have spoken to you of an admission which perhaps I ought not to make to you,” he said at length to Elena.

Giulio turned very pale; he added with difficulty and as though his breath were failing:

“Perhaps I am going to see those feelings vanish, the hope of which constitutes my life. You think me poor; that is not all: I am a brigand and the son of a brigand.”

At these words Elena, a rich man’s daughter filled with all the fears of her caste, felt that she was going to faint; she was afraid of falling to the ground. “What a grief that will be for poor Giulio!” she thought: “he will imagine that I despise him.” He was at her knees. In order not to fall she leaned upon him, and a little later fell into his arms, apparently unconscious. As we see, in the sixteenth century they liked exactitude in love stories. This was because the mind did not criticise these stories, the imagination felt them, and the passion of the reader identified itself with that of their heroes. The two manuscripts which we follow, and especially the one which presents certain turns of speech peculiar to the Florentine dialect, give in the fullest detail the history of all the meetings that followed. Danger took away all sense of guilt from the girl. Often the danger was extreme; but it did nought but inflame these two hearts for which all the sensations that arose from their love were those of happiness. Several times Fabio and his father were on the point of surprising them. They were furious, believing themselves to be defied: common rumour informed them that Giulio was Elena’s lover, and yet they could see nothing. Fabio, an impetuous young man and one proud of his birth, proposed to his father to have Giulio killed.

“So long as he remains in this world,” he said to him, “my sister’s life is a succession of the greatest dangers. Who knows but that at any moment our honour may oblige us to dip our hands in the blood of that obstinate girl? She has come to such a pitch of boldness that she no longer denies her love; you have seen her answer your reproaches only with a gloomy silence; very well, that silence is Giulio Branciforte’s death sentence.”

“Think of what his father was,” replied Signer de’ Campireali. “Certainly there is no difficulty in our going to spend six months in Rome, and, during that time, this Branciforte will disappear. But how do we know that his father, who, with all his crimes, was brave and generous, generous to the point of enriching many of his soldiers and remaining a poor man himself, how do we know that his father has not left friends behind him, either in the band of the Duca di Monte Mariano or in the Colonna band, which often occupies the woods of la Faggiola, half a league from us? In that case, we are all massacred without mercy, you, myself, and perhaps your unfortunate mother as well.”

These conversations between the father and son, often repeated, were kept no secret from Vittoria Carafa, Elena’s mother, and plunged her in despair. The upshot of Fabio’s discussions with his father was that it did not become their honour to stand peacefully by and allow a continuance of the rumours that ran rife in Albano. Since it was not prudent to secure the disappearance of this young Branciforte who, every day, appeared more insolent than ever, and in addition, dressed now in magnificent clothes, carried his self-importance to the point of speaking, in the public thoroughfares, either to Fabio or to Signer de’ Campireali himself, one, or possibly both of the following courses must be adopted: the whole family must return to live in Rome, or Elena must be sent back to the Convent of the Visitation at Castro, where she would remain until a suitable husband had been found for her.

Never had Elena confessed her love to her mother; daughter and mother loved one another tenderly, they spent their whole time together, and yet never had a single word been, uttered on this subject which interested them both almost equally. For the first time the almost exclusive subject of their thoughts was expressed in words when the mother gave her daughter to understand that there was a question of removing the household to Rome, and perhaps of sending her back to spend some years in the Convent at Castro.

This conversation was imprudent on the part of Vittoria Carafa, and can be excused only by the unreasoning affection that she felt for her daughter. Elena, desperately in love, wished to prove to her lover that she was not ashamed of his poverty, and that her confidence in his honour knew no bounds. “Who would believe it?” cries the Florentine writer; “after all these

daring assignations, attended with the risk of a horrible death, given in the garden, and once or twice even in her own room, Elena was pure! Strong in her virtue, she proposed to her lover that she should leave the palazzo, about midnight, by the garden, and spend the rest of the night in his little house built amid the ruins of Alba, more than a quarter of a league away. They disguised themselves as Franciscan friars. Elena was of tall stature, and, thus attired, appeared a young novice of eighteen or twenty. What is incredible, and shews plainly enough the finger of God, is that, in the narrow road cut through the rock, which still passes under the wall of the Capuchin convent, Giulio and his mistress, disguised as friars, met Signer de' Campireali and his son Fabio, who, followed by four servants well armed, and preceded by a page carrying a lighted torch, were returning from Castel Gandolfo, a town situated on the shore of the lake at no great distance. To allow the lovers to pass, the Campireali and their servants stood aside to the right and left of the road cut in the rock, which is about eight feet wide. How much better would it have been for Elena to be recognised at that moment! She would have been killed by a shot from her father's or her brother's pistol, and her punishment would have lasted but an instant: but heaven had ordered otherwise (Dis aliter visum).

"A further detail is added with regard to this strange encounter, which Signera de' Campireali, in her extreme old age, when almost a centenarian, used at times to relate in Rome in the presence of persons of weight, who, themselves of a great age, repeated it to me when my insatiable curiosity questioned them as to this matter and many' others.

"Fabio de' Campireali, who was a young man proud of his courage and extremely arrogant, observing that the elder of the friars gave no greeting either to his father or to himself when passing so close to them, exclaimed:

"'There's a conceited rascal of a friar! Heaven knows what he is going to do outside his convent, he and his friend, at this time of night! I don't know why I don't pull off their cowls; we should see their faces.'

"At these words, Giulio gripped his dirk under his friar's habit, and placed himself between Fabio and Elena. At that moment he was not more than a foot away from Fabio; but heaven ordered otherwise, and by a miracle

calmed the fury of these two young men, who were presently to see each other at such close quarters."

In the prosecution of Elena de' Campireali in after years, an attempt was made to present this nocturnal expedition as a proof of her corruption. It was the delirium of a young heart inflamed by a mad love, but that heart was pure.

III

It should be explained that the Orsini, the perpetual rivals of the Colonna, and all powerful at that time in the villages nearest to Rome, had recently procured the passing of a sentence of death, by the government courts, on a rich farmer named Baldassare Bandini, a native of la Petrella. It would take too long to relate here the various actions of which Bandini was accused: the majority would be crimes today, but could not be regarded in so severe a fashion in 1559. Bandini was imprisoned in a castle belonging to the Orsini, and situated in the mountains in the direction of Valmontone, six leagues from Albano. The bargello of Rome, accompanied by one hundred and fifty of his sbirri, spent a night on the road; he was coming to fetch Bandini to take him to Rome, to the Tordinona prison; Bandini had appeale'd to Rome from the sentence which condemned him to death. But, as we have said, he was a native of la Petrella, a fortress belonging to the Colonna; Bandini's wife appeared and publicly asked Fabrizio Colonna, who happened to be at la Petrella:

"Are you going to allow one of your faithful servants to die?"

Colonna replied:

"May I never, please God, be wanting in the respect I owe to the decisions of the courts of my Lord, the Pope!"

Immediately his soldiers received orders, and he sent word to all his supporters to hold themselves in readiness. The place of assembly was fixed

in the neighbourhood of Valmontone, a little town built on the summit of a rock of moderate height, but with the rampart of a continuous and almost vertical precipice of from sixty to eighty feet.

It was to this town, which belonged to the Pope, that the supporters of the Orsini and the government sbirri had succeeded in conveying Bandini. Among the most zealous supporters of authority were numbered Signor de' Campireali and Fabio, his son, who, moreover, were distantly related to the Orsini. Giulio Branciforte and his father, on the other hand, had always been attached to the Colonna,

In circumstances in which it did not suit the Colonna to act openly, they had recourse to a very simple stratagem: the majority of the wealthy Roman peasants, then as now, belonged to some confraternity or other of penitents. These penitents, whenever they appear in public, cover their heads with a piece of cloth which hides the face and is pierced with two holes opposite the eyes. When the Colonna did not wish to avow their part in any enterprise, they used to invite their supporters to put on their penitential dress before coming to join them.

After long preparations, the removal of Bandini, which for a fortnight had been the talk of the countryside, was fixed for a Sunday. On that day, at two o'clock in the morning, the governor of Valmontone had the bells rung in all the villages of the forest of la Faggiola. The peasants were to be seen emerging in considerable numbers from each village. (The customs of the mediaeval Republics, when one fought to obtain a certain thing which one desired, had preserved a great element of courage in the peasant heart; in these days, no one would stir.)

On the day in question a curious thing might have been observed: as the little troop of armed peasants issuing from every village reached the cover of the forest, it diminished by half; the supporters of the Colonna made their way to the place of assembly given out by Fabrizio. Their leaders appeared to be convinced that there would be no fighting that day: they had received orders that morning to spread this rumour. Fabrizio ranged the forest with the picked men of his supporters, whom he had mounted on the young and half-broken horses of his stud. He held a sort of review of the various detachments of peasants; but he said nothing to any of them, as a single

word might prove compromising. Fabrizio was a large, lean man, of an incredible agility and strength: although barely forty-five years old, his hair and moustache were dazzlingly white, which greatly annoyed him: by this peculiarity he could be recognised in places where he would have preferred to pass unknown. As soon as the peasants caught sight of him, they cried: “Evviva Colonna!” and put on their cloth hoods. The Prince himself had his hood hanging over his chest, so as to be able to draw it on as soon as he came in sight of the enemy.

Which enemy did not keep him waiting: the sun had scarcely risen when about a thousand men, belonging to the Orsini party, and coming from the direction of Val-montone, entered the forest and passed within some three hundred yards of the supporters of Fabrizio Colonna, who had made his men lie down. A few minutes after the last of the Orsini troops forming this advance guard had filed past, the Prince ordered his men to move; he had decided to attack Bandini’s escort a quarter of an hour after it should have entered the wood. At this point the forest is littered with small rocks fifteen or twenty feet high; these are waves of lava, more or less ancient, on which the chestnuts flourish admirably, and almost entirely shut out the light of day. As these drifts of lava, more or less eaten away by time, make the ground very uneven, to avoid making the high road pass over a number of unnecessary little gradients, the lava has been cut into, and very often the road runs three or four feet below the level of the forest.

Near the place chosen by Fabrizio for the attack, was a clearing covered with vegetation and crossed at one end by the high road. Beyond this the road again entered the forest, which, at this point, choked with brambles and shrubs between the trunks of the trees, was altogether impenetrable. It was at a point a hundred paces within the forest and on either side of the road that Fabrizio posted his men. At a signal from the Prince, each of the peasants arranged his hood, and took his post with his arquebus behind a chestnut; the Prince’s soldiers placed themselves behind the trees nearest to the road. The peasants had a definite order to fire only after the soldiers, and these were not to open fire until the enemy should be within twenty paces. Fabrizio made them hastily fell a score of trees, which, flung down with their branches upon the road, fairly narrow at that point and three feet below the level of the forest, blocked it entirely. Captain Ranuccio, with five hundred men, followed the advance guard; he had orders not to attack it until he

should hear the first arquebus shots fired from the barricade that blocked the road. When Fabrizio Colonna saw his troops and the rest of his supporters properly posted, each behind his tree, and full of determination, he set off at a gallop with all those of his men who were mounted, among whom was to be seen Giulio Branciforte. The Prince took a path to the right of the high road, which led to the farther end of the clearing.

He had been gone but a few minutes when his men saw approaching in the distance, by the road from Valmontone, a numerous troop of men on horseback; these were the sbirri and the bargello, escorting Bandini, and the whole of the Orsini horsemen. In their midst was Baldassare Bandini, surrounded by four executioners clothed in red; they had orders to carry out the sentence of the court of first instance and to put Bandini to death, if they saw the supporters of the Colonna attempting to set him free.

Colonna's cavalry had barely arrived at the end of the clearing or meadow furthest from the road, when he heard the first arquebus shots fired by the ambuscade which he had posted on the high road by the barricade. Immediately he ordered his horsemen to gallop, and made them charge upon the four executioners clothed in red who surrounded Bandini.

We shall not attempt to follow the narrative of this little affair, which was over in three quarters of an hour; the Orsini party, taken by surprise, scattered in all directions; but, in the advance guard, the gallant Captain Ranuccio was killed, an event which had a fatal influence on the destiny of Branciforte. Barely had the latter dealt a few sabre thrusts, as he made his way towards the four men clothed in red, before he found himself face to face with Fabio de' Campireali.

Mounted upon a fiery horse, and wearing a gilded giacca (a coat of mail), Fabio cried:

"Who are these wretched creatures in masks? Cut their masks off with your sabres; this is how I do it!"

A moment later, Giulio Branciforte received a horizontal slash from Fabio's sabre across his brow. This blow had been so skilfully aimed that the cloth which covered his face fell to the ground, while at the same time his eyes

were blinded by the blood that flowed from his wound, though the latter was not at all serious. Giulio reined in his horse, to give himself time to breathe and to wipe his face. He was anxious, at all costs, not to fight with Elena's brother; and his horse was already four paces from Fabio when he received a furious sabre thrust on the chest, which did not enter his body, thanks to his giacca, but did take away his breath for a moment. At the same time a voice shouted in his ear:

"Ti conosco, porco! I know you, you swine! So this is how you make money to replace your tatters!"

Giulio, stung to anger, forgot his original intention and turned on Fabio:

"Ed in mal punto venisti!" he cried. [Footnote: "And you have come at an unlucky moment!"]

After a succession of vigorous blows the garments that covered their coats of mail fell off in tatters. Fabio's coat of mail was gilded and splendid, Giulio's of the commonest kind.

"In what gutter did you pick up your giacca?" Fabio cried to him.

At that moment, Giulio found the opportunity which he had been seeking for the last half minute: Fabio's superb coat of mail did not fit closely enough round his throat, and Giulio aimed at his throat, which was bare in one place, a thrust that went home. Giulio's sword ran six inches into Fabio's breast, causing a huge jet of blood to spout forth.

"Take that for your insolence!" cried Giulio.

And he galloped towards the men dressed in red, two of whom were still in the saddle a hundred yards away. As he approached them, a third fell; but, just as Giulio came up to the fourth executioner, the latter, seeing himself surrounded by more than ten horsemen, fired a pistol point blank at the unfortunate Baldassare Bandini, who fell.

"Now, gentlemen, there is nothing more for us to do here!" cried Branciforte. "Let us sabre these rascals of sbirri who are making off everywhere,"

The others all followed him.

When, half an hour later, Giulio rejoined Fabrizio Colonna, that nobleman addressed him for the first time in his life. Giulio found him mad with rage; he had expected to see him in a transport of joy, in view of the victory, which was complete and due entirely to his good arrangement; for the Orsini had nearly three thousand men, and Fabrizio, on this occasion, had not been able to muster more than fifteen hundred.

“We have lost our gallant friend Ranuccio!” the Prince exclaimed, addressing Giulio. “I have just touched his body myself; it is cold already. Poor Baldassare Bandini is mortally wounded. So, properly speaking, we have not been successful. But the ghost of the gallant Captain Ranuccio will appear before Pluto with a good escort. I have given orders to hang all these rascally prisoners from the branches of the trees. Do your duty, gentlemen,” he cried, raising his voice.

And he went off again at a gallop to the place where the advance guard had been engaged. Giulio had been more or less second in command of Ranuccio’s company; he followed the Prince, who, on coming up to the body of that brave soldier, which lay surrounded by more than fifty of the enemy’s dead, dismounted a second time to take Ranuccio’s hand. Giulio followed his example, with tears in his eyes.

“You are very young,” the Prince said to him, “but I see you covered with blood, and your father was a brave man, who received more than a score of wounds in the service of the Colonna. Take command of what is left of Ranuccio’s company, and carry his body to our church of la Petrella; remember that you may perhaps be attacked on the way.”

Giulio was not attacked, but he killed with a stroke of his sword one of his own men, who said that he was too young to be in command. This rash act proved successful, because Giulio was still covered with Fabio’s blood. All along the road, he found the trees loaded with men who were being hanged. This hideous spectacle, combined with the death of Ranuccio, and more especially with that of Fabio, drove him almost mad. His only hope was that the name of Fabio’s conqueror would remain unknown.

We pass over the military details. Three days after the battle, he was able to return to spend a few hours at Albano; he told his friends there that a violent fever had detained him in Rome, where he had been obliged to keep his bed all the week.

But he was treated everywhere with a marked respect; the most important persons of the town made haste to greet him; some rash fellows even went so far as to call him Signor Capitano. He had passed several times in front of the palazzo Campireali, which he found entirely shut up, and, as the newly made Captain was extremely shy when it came to asking certain questions, it was not until the middle of the day that he managed to take it upon himself to say to Scotti, an old man who had always treated him kindly:

“But where are the Campireali? I see their palazzo shut up.”

“My friend,” replied Scotti with a sudden grimness, “that is a name which you must never utter. Your friends are quite convinced that it was he who attacked you, and they will say so everywhere; but, after all, he was the chief obstacle to your marriage; after all, his death leaves his sister immensely rich, and she is in love with you. It may even be added, and indiscretion becomes a virtue at this moment, it may even be added that she loves you to the extent of going to pay you a visit at night in your little house at Alba. So it may be said, in your interest, that you were husband and wife before the fatal combat at the Ciampi.” (This was the name given in the district to the fight which we have described.)

The old man broke off, because he saw that Giulio was in tears.

“Let us go up to the inn,” said Giulio. Scotti followed him; they were given a room the door of which they locked, and Giulio asked the old man’s leave to tell him everything that had happened in the last week. This long story finished:

“I can see quite well from your tears,” said the old man, “that nothing in your conduct was premeditated; but Fabio’s death is none the less a very terrible event for you. It is absolutely essential that Elena tells her mother that you have been her husband for some time.”

Giulio made no reply; this the old man ascribed to a praiseworthy discretion. Absorbed in deep meditation, Giulio was asking himself whether Elena, enraged by the death of a brother, would do justice to his delicacy; he repented of what had happened before. Afterwards, at his request, the old man told him frankly of everything that had occurred in Albano on the day of the fight. Fabio having been killed about half past six in the morning, more than six leagues from Albano, incredible as it might sound, by nine o'clock people had begun to speak of his death. Towards midday they had seen old Campireali, in floods of tears and supported by his servants, making his way to the Capuchin convent. Shortly afterwards, three of those good fathers, mounted on the best horses of the Campireali stable, and followed by a number of servants, had taken the road to the village of the Ciampi, in the neighbourhood of which the battle had been fought. Old Campireali was absolutely determined to accompany them; but he had been dissuaded, on the grounds that Fabrizio Colonna was furious (no one knew why) and might easily do him' an ill turn should he be taken prisoner.

That evening, towards midnight, the forest of la Faggiola had seemed to be on fire: this was all the monks and all the poor of Albano who, each carrying a huge lighted candle, went out to meet the body of young Fabio.

"I shall not conceal from you," the old man went on, lowering his voice as though he had been afraid of being overheard, "that the road which leads to Valmontone and to the Ciampi. . . ."

"Well?" said Giulio.

"Well, that road passes by your house, and they say that when Fabio's body reached that point, the blood gushed out from a horrible wound which he had in his throat."

"How terrible!" cried Giulio, springing to his feet.

"Calm yourself, my friend," said the old man, "you can see for yourself that you must know all. And now I may tell you that your presence here, today, has seemed a trifle premature. If you should do me the honour to consult me, I should add, Captain, that it is not advisable for you to appear in Albano for another month. I have no need to warn you that it would not be prudent to

shew yourself in Rome. We do not yet know what course the Holy Father is going to adopt towards the Colonna; it is thought that he will accept the statement of Fabrizio, who professes that he heard of the fight at the Ciampi only from common rumour; but the Governor of Rome, who is out and out Orsini, is furious and would be only too glad to have one of Fabrizio's gallant soldiers hanged, nor would Fabrizio himself have any reasonable grounds for complaint, since he swears that he took no part in the fight. I shall go farther, and, although you have not asked me for it, take the liberty of giving you a piece of military advice: you are popular in Albano, otherwise you would not be able to stay here in safety. Bear in mind that you have been walking about the town for some hours, that one of the Orsini's supporters might imagine that you were defying him, or at least think it an easy opportunity of winning a fine reward. Old Campireali has repeated a thousand times that he will give his richest estate to whoever kills you. You ought to have brought down to Albano some of the soldiers you have in your house."

"I have no soldiers in my house."

"In that case, Captain, you are mad. This inn has a garden, we are going to leave by the garden, and escape through the vineyards. I shall accompany you; I am an old man, and unarmed; but if we meet any ill-disposed persons, I shall talk to them, and at least be able to let you gain time."

Giulio was broken-hearted. Dare we mention the nature of his madness? As soon as he had learned that the palazzo Campireali was shut up and that its occupants had left for Rome, he had formed the plan of going to revisit that garden where so often he had conversed with Elena. He even hoped to see once again her bedroom, where he had been received when her mother was away. He felt the need of reassuring himself against her anger, by the sight of the places in which she had been so loving to him.

Branciforte and the chivalrous old man met with no misadventure as they followed the little paths that run through the vineyards and climb towards the lake.

Giulio made his companion tell him once more the details of young Fabio's burial. The body of that gallant young man, escorted by a crowd of priests,

had been taken to Rome, and buried in the chapel of his family, in the Convent of Sant' Onofrio, on the summit of the Janiculum. It had been observed, as something extremely unusual, that, on the eve of the ceremony, Elena had been taken back by her father to the Convent of the Visitation, at Castro; this had confirmed the common report which insisted that she was secretly married to the soldier of fortune who had had the misfortune to kill her brother.

On nearing his own house, Giulio found the corporal of his company and four of his men; they told him that their old captain used never to leave the forest without having some of his men at hand. The Prince had said many times that, whenever anyone wished to have himself killed by his own rashness, he must first resign his commission, so as not to cast upon him the responsibility for avenging another death.

Giulio Branciforte realised the soundness of these ideas, of which until that moment he had been completely ignorant. He had supposed, as young nations suppose, that war consisted only in fighting with personal courage. He at once complied with the Prince's wishes, only giving himself time to embrace the wise old man who had been so chivalrous as to accompany him to his house.

But, not many days later, Giulio, half mad with melancholy, returned to visit the palazzo Campireali. As night was falling, he and three of his men, disguised as Neapolitan merchants, made their way into Albano. He presented himself alone at the house of Scotti; he learned that Elena was still confined in the convent of Castro. Her father, who believed her to be married to the man whom he called his son's murderer, had sworn never to set eyes on her again. He had not seen her even when he was taking her to the convent. Her mother's affection seemed, on the contrary, to have increased, and she often left Rome to go and spend a day or two with her daughter.

IV

“If I do not justify myself to Elena,” Giulio told himself as he made his way back, by night, to the quarters which his company were occupying in the forest, “she will come to regard me as a murderer. Heaven knows what stories they have been telling her about this fatal fight!”

He went to receive his orders from the Prince in his stronghold of la Petrella, and asked leave to go to Castro. Fabrizio Colonna frowned:

“The matter of the little disturbance is not yet settled with His Holiness. You must understand that I have told the truth, namely that I knew nothing whatever of that encounter, of which I was not even informed until the following day, here, in my castle of la Petrella. I have every reason to believe that His Holiness will finally accept this sincere statement. But the Orsini are powerful, and everybody is saying that you distinguished yourself in the skirmish. The Orsini go so far as to pretend that a number of prisoners were hanged from the branches of the trees. You know how little truth there is in that; but we may expect reprisals.”

The profound astonishment revealed in the young captain’s artless gaze amused the Prince: he decided, however, seeing such a display of innocence, that it would be as well to speak more plainly.

“I see in you,” he went on, “that absolute bravery which has made the name of Branciforte famous throughout Italy. I hope that you will shew that loyalty towards my house which made your father so dear to me, and which I have sought to reward in you. The standing order among my troops is this: never tell the truth about anything that relates to me or to my men. If, at the moment when you are obliged to speak, you see no advantage in any particular falsehood, lie at random, and avoid as you would avoid a mortal sin ever uttering a word of the truth. You can understand that, taken in conjunction with other information, it may put people on the track of my plans. I know, as it happens, that you have a little love affair in the convent at Castro; you may go and waste a fortnight in that town, where the Orsini are certain to have friends, and even agents. Call on my steward, who will pay you two hundred sequins. The affection that I had for your father,” the Prince added with a smile, “prompts me to give you a few instructions as to the best way of carrying out this amorous and military undertaking. You and three of your men will be disguised as merchants; you will not forget to lose

your temper with one of your companions, who will make a show of being always drunk, and will make plenty of friends for himself by standing wine to all the vagabonds of Castro. . . . Apart from that," the Prince went on, with a change of tone, "if you are taken by the Orsini and put to death, never confess your true name, still less that you belong to me. I have no need to advise you to make a circuit of all the small towns, and always to enter by the gate farthest from the road by which you arrive."

Giulio's heart was melted by this fatherly advice, coming from a man who was ordinarily so solemn. At first the Prince smiled at the tears which he saw gathering in the young man's eyes; then his own voice altered. He slipped off one of the many rings which he wore on his fingers; as he took it, Giulio kissed that hand, famous for so many great deeds.

"My father would never have told me so much," the young man cried enthusiastically.

Two days later, shortly before dawn, he passed within the walls of the small town of Castro; five soldiers followed him, disguised like himself: two of them kept to themselves and appeared not to know either him or the other three. Even before entering the town, Giulio caught sight of the Convent of the Visitation, a vast building surrounded by dark walls, and not unlike a fortress. He hastened to the church, which was magnificent. The nuns, all of them noble and mostly belonging to wealthy families, competed among themselves in their pride for the privilege of enriching this church, the only part of the convent that was exposed to the public gaze. It had become a custom that whichever of these ladies the Pope appointed Abbess, from a list of three names presented to him by the Cardinal Protector of the Order of the Visitation, made a considerable offering, intended to perpetuate her name. Any whose offering was inferior to that of the previous Abbess was despised, and her family as well.

Giulio made his way trembling through this magnificent building, resplendent with marble and gilding. As a matter of fact, he paid little attention to the marble or the gilding; he felt that Elena's eyes were upon him. The high altar, he was told, had cost more than eight hundred thousand francs; but his gaze, scorning the treasures of the high altar, was directed at a gilded grating, nearly forty feet high, and divided into three sections by a

pair of marble pillars. This grating, whose vast mass made it appear almost terrifying, rose behind the high altar, and separated the nuns' choir from the church itself, which was open to all the faithful.

Giulio told himself that behind this gilded grating were assembled, during the services, the nuns and their boarders. To this inner church might repair, at any hour of the day, a nun or a boarder who felt a desire to pray; it was upon this circumstance, known to the world at large, that the poor lover's hopes were based.

It was true that an immense black curtain screened the inner side of the grating; but "that curtain," thought Giulio, "cannot entirely block the view for the boarders when they look into the public church, since I, who am unable to approach within a certain distance of it, can see quite well, through the curtain, the windows that light the choir, and can even make out the smallest architectural details." Each bar of this magnificent grating was armed with a strong spike, pointed towards the worshippers.

Giulio chose a place where he would be clearly visible, opposite the left hand side of the grating, in the most brightly lighted part of the church; there he spent his time hearing masses. As he saw no one near him but peasants, he had hopes of being observed, even through the black curtain which draped the inside of the grating. For the first time in his life, this simple young man sought to create an effect; he dressed himself with care; he scattered alms broadcast as he entered and left the church. His men and himself paid endless attentions to all the workmen and small tradesmen who had any dealings with the convent. It was not, however, until the third day that he at last had hopes of conveying a letter to Elena. By his orders, his men closely followed the two lay sisters whose duty it was to purchase some of the provisions for the convent; one of them was on friendly terms with a small merchant. One of Giulio's soldiers, who had been in religion, made friends with this merchant, and promised him a sequin for each letter that should be conveyed to the boarder Elena de' Campireali.

"What!" said the merchant at the first overture that was made to him in the matter, "a letter to the brigand's wife!"

This name was already in common use in Castro, and Elena had not been there a fortnight: so swiftly does anything that seizes hold of the imagination circulate among this people, passionately interested in all exact details!

The merchant added:

“At least, she is married! But how many of our ladies have not that excuse, and yet receive a great deal more than letters from outside.”

In this first letter, Giulio related with endless details everything that had occurred on the fatal day marked by the death of Fabio: “Do you hate me?” he said in conclusion.

Elena replied in a few lines that, without hating anyone, she was going to employ the rest of her life in trying to forget the man by whose hand her brother had perished.

Giulio made haste to reply; after inveighing against his fate, in a style imitated from Plato and in fashion at the time:

“So you wish,” he went on, “to forget the Word of God handed down to us in the Holy Scriptures? God says: woman shall leave her family and her parents to follow her husband. Dare you pretend that you are not my wife? Remember the night of Saint Peter’s day. As dawn was beginning to appear behind Monte Cavi, you flung yourself at my feet; I was good enough to grant you a respite; you were mine, had I wished to take you; you could not resist the love which you then felt for me. Suddenly it occurred to me that, as I had told you many times that I had long since offered you the sacrifice of my life and of all that I might hold most dear in the world, you were in a position to reply, although you never did, that all these sacrifices, not being marked by any outward action, might well be no more than imaginary. An idea, hard to bear, but fundamentally just, dawned upon me. I reflected that it was not for nothing that chance was presenting me with the opportunity of sacrificing in your interest the greatest happiness that I could ever have dreamed of. You were already in my arms, and defenceless, remember; your own lips dared not refuse. At that moment the morning Angélus rang from the convent of Monte Cavi, and, by a miracle, the sound reached our ears. You said to me: ‘Make this sacrifice to the Holy Madonna, the mother of all

purity.' I had already, a moment earlier, had the idea of this supreme sacrifice, the only real sacrifice that I should ever have an opportunity of making for you. I felt it strange that the same idea should have occurred to you. The distant sound of that Angelus touched me, I confess; I granted your request. The sacrifice was not entirely for you; I believed that I was placing our future union under the protection of the Madonna. At that time I supposed that the objections would come not from you, faithless one, but from your rich and noble family. Had there not been some supernatural intervention, how could that Angelus have reached our ears from so great a distance, carried over the tree-tops of half the forest, stirred at that moment by the morning breeze? Then, you remember, you threw yourself at my feet; I rose, I took from my bosom the cross which I carry there, and you swore upon that cross, which is here before me, and by your own eternal damnation, that in whatever place you might at any time be, whatever might at any time happen, as soon as I should give you the order, you would place yourself entirely at my disposal, as you were at the moment when the Angelus from Monte Cavi travelled so far to strike your ear. We then repeated devoutly two Hail Marys and two Our Fathers. Very well, by the love which you then felt for me, or else, if you have forgotten it, as I fear, by your eternal damnation, I order you to receive me to-night, in your room or in the garden of the Convent of the Visitation."

The Italian author carefully reports many long letters written by Giulio Branciforte after this one; but he gives only extracts from the replies of Elena de' Campireali. After the lapse of two hundred and seventy-eight years, we are so remote from the sentiments of love and religion which fill these letters, that I have been afraid of their seeming wearisome.

It appears from these letters that Elena finally obeyed the order contained in this one, of which we have given an abridged translation. Giulio found a way of penetrating into the convent; we may conclude from a certain passage that he disguised himself as a woman. Elena received him, but only at the grating of a window on the ground floor looking out to the garden. To his unspeakable grief, Giulio found that this girl, so tender and indeed so passionate before, had become like a stranger to him; she treated him almost with civility. In admitting him to the garden, she had yielded almost exclusively to the obligation of her oath. Their meeting was brief: after a few

moments, Giulio's pride, excited a little, perhaps, by the events that had occurred in the last fortnight, succeeded in prevailing over his intense grief.

"I see before me now," he said to himself, "only the tomb of that Elena who, at Albano, seemed to have given herself to me for life."

Immediately, the important thing for Giulio was to conceal the tears with which the polite turns of speech that Elena adopted in addressing him bathed his cheeks. When she had finished speaking and justifying a change that was so natural, she said, after the death of a brother, Giulio said to her, speaking very slowly:

"You are not abiding by your oath, you do not receive me in a garden, you are not on your knees before me, as you were for a minute after we had heard the Angelus from Monte Cavi. Forget your oath if you can; as for me, I forget nothing; may God help you!"

So saying, he left the barred window before which he might still have remained for nearly an hour. Who would have said, a moment earlier, that he would of his own free will cut short this meeting for which he had so longed! This sacrifice rent his heart; but he felt that he might well deserve Elena's scorn if he replied to her civilities otherwise than by abandoning her to her own remorse.

Before dawn, he left the convent. At once he mounted his horse, giving orders to his men to wait for him at Castro for a full week, then to return to the forest. At first he rode towards Rome.

"What! I am going away from her!" he said to himself at every yard: "What! We have become strangers to one another! Oh, Fabio! How amply you are avenged!"

The sight of the men whom he passed on the road increased his anger; he urged his horse across country and made his way towards the deserted and uncultivated tract by the seashore. When he was no longer disturbed by meeting these placid peasants whose lot he envied, he drew breath; the aspect of this wild spot was in keeping with his despair and lessened his rage; then he was able to give himself up to the consideration of his sad fate.

“At my age,” he said to himself, “I have one resource left: to love some other woman!”

At this melancholy thought, he felt his despair increase twofold; he saw only too clearly that there was for him but one woman in the world. He pictured to himself the torment that he would suffer should he venture to utter the word love to any woman but Elena: the idea tore his heart.

He was seized with a fit of bitter laughter. “Here I am,” he thought, “exactly like those heroes in Ariosto who travel alone through desert lands, when they have to forget that they have found their mistress in the arms of some other knight. . . . And yet she is not so much to blame,” he told himself, bursting into tears after this fit of wild laughter; “her faithlessness does not reach the point of loving another. That keen, pure spirit has allowed herself to be led astray by the dreadful accounts that have been given her of me; no doubt I have been represented to her as having armed myself for that fatal expedition only in the secret hope of finding an opportunity of killing her brother. They will have gone farther still: they will have credited me with the sordid calculation that once her brother was dead she would become the sole heiress of an immense property. . . . And I have been fool enough to leave her for a whole fortnight a prey to the wiles of my enemies! It must be admitted that if I am most unfortunate, heaven has also furnished me with singularly little sense with which to conduct my life! I am a most miserable, most contemptible creature! My life has been of use to no one, and to myself least of all.”

At that moment, young Branciforte had an inspiration very rare in that age: his horse was going along the water’s edge, and every now and then was being splashed by the waves; he had the idea of urging the animal into the sea, and so ending the dreadful fate that overhung him. What was he to do henceforward, after the one person in the world who had ever made him feel the existence of happiness had abandoned him? Then suddenly another idea stopped him short.

“What are the pains that I am enduring,” he said to himself, “compared with those which I shall suffer in a moment, once this wretched life is ended? Elena will no longer be simply indifferent to me, as she is in reality; I shall see her in the arms of a rival, and that rival will be some young Roman

noble, rich and highly esteemed; for, to rend my heart, the devils will seek out the most cruel visions, as is their duty. So I shall never succeed in finding forgetfulness of Elena, even in death; far from it, my passion for her will be doubled, because that is the surest means which the Eternal Power can find of punishing me for the fearful sin which I shall have committed."

To banish the temptation finally, Giulio began devoutly reciting the Hail Mary. It was on hearing the morning Angelus, the prayer sacred to the Madonna, that he had been carried away before, and led to a generous action which he now regarded as the greatest mistake of his life. But, from a sense of reverence, he did not venture to go farther and express the whole of the idea that had seized hold of his mind.

"If, by the Madonna's inspiration, I have fallen into a fatal error, ought she not, in her infinite justice, to bring about some circumstance which will restore my happiness?"

This idea of the justice of the Madonna gradually banished his despair. He raised his head, and saw facing him, beyond Albano and the forest, that Monte Cavi, covered in its dusky greenery, and the holy convent whose morning Angelus had led him into what he now called his appalling stupidity. The unexpected sight of that holy place comforted him.

"No!" he exclaimed; "it is impossible that the Madonna should abandon me. If Elena had been my wife, as her love allowed and my dignity as a man required, the account given to her of her brother's death would have found in her heart the memory of the bond that attached her to me. She would have told herself that she belonged to me long before the fatal chance which, on a field of battle, brought me face to face with Fabio. He was two years older than I; he was more skilled in arms, bolder in every way, stronger. A thousand reasons would have occurred to my wife to prove that it was not I that had sought that combat. She would have remembered that I had never shewn the slightest feeling of hatred towards her brother, even when he fired his arquebus at me. I can recall that at our first meeting, after my return from Rome, I said to her: 'What would you have? Honour required it; I cannot blame a brother!'"

His hope restored by his devotion to the Madonna, Giulio urged on his horse and in a few hours arrived at his company's cantonment. He found his men standing to arms: they were about to take the road that runs from Naples to Rome past Monte Cassino. The young captain changed horses, and marched with his men. There was no fighting that day. Giulio never asked himself why they were on the march; it mattered little to him. The moment that he found himself at the head of his soldiers, a new vision of his destiny appeared to him.

"I am simply and solely a fool," he said to himself; "I did wrong to leave Castro; Elena is probably less to blame than I in my anger imagined. No, she cannot have ceased to belong to me, that pure and simple heart, in which I have beheld the first dawn of love! She was steeped in so sincere a passion for me! Has she not offered, ten times and more, to fly with me, poor as I am, and to have ourselves married by one of the friars of Monte Cavi? At Castro I ought, first of all, to have obtained a second assignation, and made her listen to reason. Really, passion makes me as distracted as a child! God! Why have I not a friend to whom I can turn for advice! The same course of action seems to me execrable, and, the next minute, excellent."

On the evening of that day, as they left the high road to return to the forest, Giulio rode up to the Prince and asked whether he might stay for a few days longer at the place he knew of.

"You can go to the devil!" cried Fabrizio, "do you think this is the time to bother me with your childish nonsense?"

An hour later, Giulio set off again for Castro. He found his men there, but he did not know how to write to Elena, after the summary fashion in which he had left her. His first letter contained only these words: "May I be received tomorrow evening?"

Similarly, "You may come," was all the answer he received.

After Giulio's departure, Elena had imagined herself to be abandoned for ever. Then she had felt the whole force of the argument urged by that poor young man who was so unhappy: she was his wife before he had had the misfortune to encounter her brother on a field of battle.

On this occasion, Giulio was by no means received with the polite turns of speech which had struck him as so cruel at their former meeting. It was true that Elena appeared to him only behind the shelter of her barred window; but she was trembling, and as Giulio was extremely reserved and his language [Footnote: In Italy the fashion of addressing a person as tu, voi or Lei marks the degree of intimacy. The word tu, a survival from the Latin, has a more restricted application than in France.] almost that which he would have used to address a stranger, it was Elena's turn to feel all the cruelty that exists in the almost official tone when it follows the most tender intimacy. Giulio, who was especially afraid of having his soul torn asunder by some cold speech proceeding from Elena's heart, had adopted a lawyer's tone to prove that Elena was his wife long before the fatal combat at the Ciampi. Elena let him speak, because she was afraid of being overcome by tears if she answered him otherwise than with a few brief words. Finally, seeing that she was on the point of betraying herself, she bade her lover come again the next day. Giulio, who was reasoning like a lover, left the garden deep in thought; he could not bring his uncertainty to the point of deciding whether he had been well or ill received; and as military ideas, inspired by conversation with his comrades, were beginning to take root in his brain:

"One day," he said to himself, "I shall perhaps have to come and carry off Elena."

And he began to consider the ways of entering the garden by force. As the convent was very rich and offered grand opportunities of pillage, it had in its pay a great number of menservants, mostly old soldiers; they were housed in a sort of barrack the barred windows of which overlooked the narrow passage which, from the outer gate of the convent, carved out of a sombre wall more than eighty feet high, led to the inner gate guarded by the portress. On the left of this narrow passage rose the barrack, on the right the wall of the garden, thirty feet high. The front of the convent, on the public square, was a massive wall black with age, and offered no openings save the outer gate and one small window through which the soldiers could see what went on outside. One may imagine the grim effect of this great black wall pierced only by a gate strengthened with broad iron bands fastened to it by enormous nails, and a single small window four feet high and eighteen inches broad.

We shall not attempt to follow the author of the original manuscript in his long account of the successive assignations which Giulio obtained from Elena. The tone mutually adopted by the lovers had once more become entirely intimate, as in the past in the garden at Albano; only Elena had never consented to come down to the garden. One night Giulio found her profoundly thoughtful: her mother had come from Rome to see her, and was staying for some days in the convent. This mother was so loving, she had always shewn such delicacy in her treatment of what she supposed to be her daughter's affections, that the latter felt a profound remorse at being obliged to deceive her; for, after all, would she ever dare to tell her that she was receiving the man who had robbed her of her son? Elena ended by admitting frankly to Giulio that if this mother who was so good to her should question her in a certain way, she would never have the strength to answer her with lies. Giulio was fully aware of the danger of his position; his fate depended on the chance which might dictate certain words to Signora de' Campireali. On the following night he said to her, with a resolute air:

"To-morrow I shall come earlier, I shall detach one of the bars of this grating, you will come down to the garden, I shall take you to a church in the town, where a priest who is devoted to me will marry us. Before daylight you will be back in this garden. Once you are my wife, I shall have nothing more to fear, and if your mother insists upon it, as an expiation of the fearful misfortune which we all equally deplore, I will consent to anything, were it even that I must spend some months without seeing you."

As Elena appeared terrified by this proposal, Giulio added:

"The Prince summons me back to his side; honour and all sorts of reasons oblige me to go. My proposal is the only one that can assure our future happiness; if you do not agree to it, let us separate for ever, here, at this moment. I shall leave you with a sense of remorse at my rashness. I trusted in your word of honour, you are unfaithful to the most sacred of oaths, and I hope that in the course of time the contempt which your fickleness rightly inspires in me may cure me of this love which has been for too long the bane of my life."

Elena burst into tears:

“Great God!” she exclaimed, weeping, “how terrible for my mother!”

In the end, she agreed to the proposal that had been made to her.

“But,” she added, “some one may see us, going or coming; think of the scandal that would arise, consider the fearful position in which my mother would find herself placed; let us wait until she goes, which will be in a few days.”

“You have succeeded in making me doubt what was to me the holiest, the most sacred thing in the world: my confidence in your word. To-morrow night we will be married, or else we see one another now for the last time, on this side of the grave.”

Poor Elena could make no answer save by her tears, her heart was torn especially by the cruel and decided tone which Giulio had adopted. Had she then really merited his contempt? Could this be that same lover who was formerly so docile and so tender? At length she agreed to what had been ordered of her. Giulio withdrew. From that moment, Elena awaited the coming of the following night in an alternation of the most rending anxieties. Had she been prepared for certain death, her anguish would have been less keen; she could have found some encouragement in the thought of Giulio’s love and of her mother’s tender affection. The rest of that night passed in the most agonising changes of mind. There were moments when she decided to tell her mother all. Next day, she was so pale when she appeared in her mother’s presence, that the latter, forgetting all her wise resolutions, flung herself upon her daughter’s bosom, crying:

“What is happening? Great God! Tell me what you have done, or what you are going to do? If you were to take a dagger and thrust it into my heart, you would hurt me less than by this cruel silence which I see you adopt with me.”

Her mother’s intense affection was so evident to Elena, she saw so clearly that her mother, instead of exaggerating her feelings, was seeking to moderate her expression of them, that in the end she was overcome; she fell at her feet. Her mother, who was trying to find out what the fatal secret might be, having exclaimed that Elena was shunning her society, Elena

replied that, next day and every day after that, she would spend all her time with her, but she besought her not to question her further.

This indiscreet utterance was speedily followed by a full confession. Signora de' Campireali was horrified to hear that her son's murderer was so close at hand. But this grief was followed by an outburst of keen and pure joy. Who could describe her delight when she learned that her daughter had never failed in her duties?

Immediately all the plans of this prudent mother were completely changed; she felt herself entitled to employ a stratagem to outwit a man who was nothing to her. Elena's heart was torn by the most cruel impulses of passion: the sincerity of her confession could not have been greater; this tormented soul was in need of relief. Signora de' Campireali, who had begun to think that anything was permissible, devised a chain of reasoning too long to be reported here. She had no difficulty in proving to her unhappy daughter that, instead of a clandestine marriage, which always leaves a stain upon a woman's reputation, she would obtain a public and perfectly honourable marriage, if she would only agree to postpone for a week the act of obedience which she owed to so high-minded a lover.

Signora de' Campireali herself would return to Rome; she would explain to her husband that, long before the fatal combat at the Ciampi, Elcna had been married to Giulio. The ceremony had been performed on that very night when, disguised in a religious habit, she had met her father and brother by the shore of the lake, on the road cut through the rock which runs by the walls of the Capuchin convent. The mother took good care not to leave her daughter all that day, and finally, towards evening, Elena wrote her lover an ingenuous and, to our ideas, extremely touching letter, in which she told him of the inward struggle that had torn her heart. She ended by begging him on her knees for a week's respite: "As I write you," she added, "this letter for which a messenger of my mother's is waiting, it seems to me that I was utterly wrong to tell her everything. I think I see you angry, your eyes look at me with hatred; my heart is torn by the most cruel remorse. You will say that I have a very weak, very cowardly, very contemptible nature; I admit it, my dear angel. But try to imagine the scene: my mother, in floods of tears, was almost at my feet. Then it became impossible for me not to tell her that a certain reason prevented me from consenting to do what she asked; and,

once I had been so weak as to utter those rash words, I do not know what change occurred in me, but it became almost impossible for me not to tell her everything that had passed between us. So far as I can remember, I felt that my heart, robbed of all its strength, stood in need of advice. This I hoped to find in a mother's words. . . . I forgot, my friend, that that beloved mother had an interest opposed to yours. I forgot my first duty, which is to obey you, and apparently I am incapable of feeling true love, which is said to withstand every trial. Despise me, my Giulio; but, in God's name, do not cease to love me. Carry me off if you wish, but do me the justice to admit that, if my mother had not happened to be here in the convent, the most horrible dangers, shame itself, nothing in the world could have prevented me from obeying your orders. But that mother is so good; so clever; so generous; remember what I told you at the time; when my father burst into my room, she rescued your letters which I had no means of hiding: then, when the danger was over, she gave them back to me without wishing to read them, and without a single word of reproach! In the same way, all my life long, she has been to me, as she was at that moment, supreme. You can see whether I ought to love her, and yet, when I write to you (it is a horrible thing to say) I feel that I hate her. She has announced that on account of the heat she wishes to spend the night in a tent in the garden; I hear the tapping of the mallets, they are putting up the tent now; impossible for us to meet to-night. I am even afraid that the boarders' dormitory may be locked, as well as the two doors of the spiral staircase, a thing which is never done. These precautions would make it impossible for me to come down to the garden, even if I thought that it would have any effect in calming your anger. Oh, how I would give myself to you at this moment, if I had the means! How I should run to that church where they are going to marry us!"

This letter concludes with a couple of pages of mad sentences, in which I notice certain impassioned arguments which seem to be imitated from the philosophy of Plato. I have suppressed several elegances of this sort in the letter I have just translated.

Giulio Branciforte was amazed when he received it about an hour before the evening Angelus; he had just completed his arrangements with the priest. He was beside himself with rage.

“She has no need to advise me to carry her off, the weak, cowardly creature!”

And he set off at once for the forest of la Faggiola.

Meanwhile, Signora de’ Campireali’s position was as follows: her husband lay on his deathbed, the impossibility of avenging himself on Branciforte was carrying him slowly to the grave. In vain had he made his agents offer considerable sums to Roman bravi; none of these was prepared to attack one of the caporali, as they were called, of Prince Colonna; they were too certain of being exterminated, themselves and their families. It was not a year since an entire village had been burned to punish the death of one of Colonna’s soldiers, and all those of the inhabitants, men and women alike, who tried to flee into the country, had their hands and feet tied together with ropes, and were then tossed into the blazing houses.

Signora de’ Campireali had large estates in the Kingdom of Naples; her husband had ordered her to send there for assassins, but she had made only a show of obedience: she imagined her daughter to be irrevocably bound to Giulio Branciforte. Acting on this supposition, she thought that Giulio should go and serve for a campaign or two in the Spanish armies, which were then making war on the rebels in Flanders. If he survived, that would, she thought, be a sign that God did not disapprove of a necessary marriage; in that case she would give her daughter the estates which she owned in the Kingdom of Naples; Giulio Branciforte would take the name of one of these estates, and would go with his wife to spend a few years in Spain. After all these trials perhaps she would have the heart to see him. But the whole aspect of things had been changed by her daughter’s confession: the marriage was no longer a necessity: far from it, and while Elena was writing her lover the letter which we have translated, Signora de’ Campireali wrote to Pescara and Chieti, ordering her farmers to send to her at Castro a party of trustworthy men capable of a bold stroke. She did not conceal from them that it was a question of avenging the death of Fabio, their young master. The courier who conveyed these letters set off before the end of the day.

V

But, two days later, Giulio was back in Castro, bringing with him eight of his men who had volunteered to follow him and expose themselves to the anger of the Prince, who had sometimes punished with death enterprises of the sort on which they were engaging. Giulio had five men at Castro, he arrived with eight more; and yet fourteen soldiers, however brave, seemed to him insufficient for his task, for the convent was like a fortress.

One had first to pass, by force or by guile, through the outer gate of the convent; then to proceed along a passage more than fifty yards in length. On the left, as has been said, rose the barred windows of a sort of barrack in which the nuns had placed thirty or forty menservants, old soldiers. From these barred windows a hot fire would be opened as soon as the alarm should be given.

The reigning Abbess, who had a head on her shoulders, was afraid of the exploits of the Orsini chiefs, Prince Colonna, Marco Sciarra, and all the others that held sway in the neighbourhood. How was one to hold out against eight hundred determined men, suddenly occupying a little town like Castro and imagining the convent to be full of gold?

As a rule, the Visitation of Castro had fifteen or twenty bravi in the barrack to the left of the passage which led to the inner gate of the convent; on the right of this passage was a great wall, impossible to break through; at the end of the passage one came upon an iron gate opening upon a pillared hall; beyond this hall was the great courtyard of the convent. This iron gate was guarded by the portress.

When Giulio, followed by his eight men, had come within three leagues of Castro, he halted in a lonely inn until the heat of the day should be past. It was only there that he announced his intention; he then traced in the dust of the courtyard the plan of the convent which he was going to attack.

“At nine o’clock this evening,” he said to his men, “we sup outside the town; at midnight we enter; we shall find your five comrades who will be waiting for us near the convent. One of them, who will be mounted, will pretend to be a courier arriving from Rome to summon Signora de’ Campireali to the

bedside of her husband, who is dying. We shall try to get without noise past the outer gate of the convent, which is there, close to the barrack," he said, pointing to it on his plan in the dust. "If we were to begin our fight at the first gate, we should be making it easy for the nuns' bravi to shoot us down with their arquebuses while we were still in the little square, here, outside the convent, or while we were going along the narrow passage which leads from the first gate to the second. This second gate is of iron, but I have the key.

"It is true that there are enormous iron rods, or valets, fastened to the wall at one end, and these, when they are in position, prevent the two halves of the gate from opening. But as these two iron rods are too heavy for the portress to be able to handle them, I have never seen them in position; and yet I have passed ten times and more through this iron gate. I expect to pass through it again to-night without difficulty. You understand that I have friends inside the convent; my object is to carry off a boarder, not a nun; we must not use our arms except in the last extremity. If we should begin the fight before reaching this second gate with the iron bars, the portress would not fail to call two old gardeners, men of seventy, who sleep inside the convent, and the old men would fix in position the iron bars of which I have spoken. Should this misfortune befall us, we shall be obliged, in order to pass the gate, to destroy the wall, which will take ten minutes; in any case, I shall advance first towards the gate. One of the gardeners is in my pay; but I have taken good care, as you can imagine, not to speak to him of the abduction I have in mind. Once past this second gate, we turn to the right, and come to the garden; as soon as we are in the garden, the fight begins, we must go for everyone we see. You will of course use only your swords and dirks, a single shot from an arquebus would set the whole town stirring, and we might be attacked on coming out. Not that with thirteen men such as you I have any misgivings about getting through a little place like that: certainly no one would dare come down to the street; but many of the townsfolk have arquebuses, and they would fire from the windows. In that case, we should have to keep close to the walls of the houses, so much for that. Once you are in the convent garden, you will say in a low voice to every man that shews his face: Retire; you will kill with your dirks any that does not immediately obey. I shall go up into the convent by the little door from the garden, with those of you that are near me; three minutes later I shall come down with one or two women whom we shall carry in our arms, without allowing them

to walk. We shall then go quickly out of the convent and the town. I shall leave two of you near the gate, they will fire twenty rounds from their arquebuses, one every minute, to frighten the townsfolk and keep them at a distance."

Giulio repeated this explanation a second time.

"Do you quite understand?" he asked his men. "It will be dark in that hall; on the right the garden, on the left the courtyard; you must not lose your way."

"Count on us!" cried the soldiers.

Then they went off to drink; the corporal did not follow them but asked leave to speak to the captain.

"Nothing could be simpler," he said to him, "than your honour's plan. I have already forced two convents in my time; this will make the third; but there are not enough of us. If the enemy oblige us to pull down the wall that supports the hinges of the second gate, we must bear in mind that the bravi in the barrack will not be idle during that long operation; they will kill seven or eight of your men with arquebus shots, and after that they may seize the lady from us as we come out. That is what happened to us in a convent near Bologna: they killed five of our men, we killed eight of theirs, but the captain did not get the lady. I suggest to your honour two things: I know four peasants close to this inn where we are now, who have served gallantly under Sciarra, and for a sequin will fight all night like lions. They may perhaps steal some silver from the convent; that does not matter to you, the sin is upon their heads, you simply pay them to secure a lady, that is all. My second suggestion is this: Ugone is a fellow with some education, and very quick; he was a doctor when he killed his brother-in-law and took to the macchia. You might send him, an hour before nightfall, to the gate of the convent; he will ask to take service there, and will manage so well that he will be admitted to the guardroom; he will fill the nuns' servants with liquor; more than that, he is quite capable of wetting the matches of their arquebuses."

Unfortunately, Giulio accepted the corporal's suggestion. As the man was leaving his presence, he added:

"We are going to attack a convent, that means major excommunication, and besides, this convent is under the immediate protection of the Madonna. . . ."

"I hear you!" cried Giulio, as though aroused by the last words. "Stay here with me."

The corporal shut the door and came back to repeat the Rosary with Giulio. Their prayers lasted for fully an hour. At dusk, they took the road again.

As midnight struck, Giulio, who had entered Castro by himself about eleven o'clock, returned to fetch his party outside the gate. He entered the town with his eight soldiers, who had been joined by three peasants, well armed; adding to these the five soldiers whom he already had in the town, he found himself at the head of a band of sixteen resolute men; two were disguised as servants, they had put on loose shirts of black cloth to hide their giacchi (coats of mail), and they wore no plumes in their caps.

At half past twelve, Giulio, who had cast himself for the part of courier, arrived at a gallop at the gate of the convent, making a great noise, and shouting to the inmates to open at once to a courier sent by the Cardinal. He was pleased to see that the soldiers who answered him through the little window, by the side of the outer gate, were more than half drunk already. Complying with the custom, he handed in his name on a slip of paper; a soldier went to give this to the portress, who had the key of the second gate, and on important occasions had to arouse the Abbess. For three mortal quarters of an hour he was kept waiting for an answer; during this time, Giulio had great difficulty in keeping his troop silent: some of the townsfolk were even beginning timidly to open their windows, when a favourable reply at length arrived from the Abbess. Giulio entered the guard-room by means of a ladder five or six feet in length, which was let down to him from the little window, the bravi of the convent not wishing to give themselves the trouble of opening the great gate: this ladder he climbed, followed by the two soldiers disguised as servants. As he jumped from the window sill into the guard-room, he caught the eye of Ugone; the whole of the guard were drunk, thanks to his efforts. Giulio told the man in charge that three servants

of the Campireali household, whom he had armed like soldiers to serve as his escort on the road, had found a place where there was good brandy for sale, and asked that they might come up instead of cooling their heels on the square; this request was unanimously granted. As for himself, accompanied by his two men, he went down by the staircase which led from the guard-room into the passage.

“Try to open the big gate,” he said to Ugone.

He himself arrived without the least trouble at the iron gate. There he found the good portress, who told him that as it was past midnight, if he entered the convent, the Abbess would be obliged to report it to the Bishop; accordingly she sent word asking him to hand his dispatches to a young sister whom she had sent to receive them. To which Giulio replied that in the confusion surrounding the sudden decline of Signor de’ Campireali, he had been given nothing but a simple letter of credit written by the doctor, and had been ordered to communicate all the details by word of mouth to the dying man’s wife and daughter, should those ladies still be in the convent, and in any event to the Lady Abbess. The portress went to convey this message. There remained by the gate only the young sister sent down by the Abbess. Giulio while he talked and joked with her, slipped his hands through the great iron bars of the gate, and, still laughing, attempted to open it. The sister, who was very timid, was alarmed and took the pleasantry amiss; then Giulio, seeing that a considerable amount of time had passed, was rash enough to offer her a handful of sequins, begging her to open the gate for him, adding that he was too tired to wait any longer. He saw quite well that he was doing a foolish thing, says the historian: it was with steel and not with gold that he should have acted, but he had no heart for that: nothing could have been easier than to seize the sister, who was not a foot away from him on the other side of the gate. At his offer of the sequins, the girl took fright. She said afterwards that, from the way in which Giulio addressed her, she realised quite clearly that he was not a mere courier: “He will be the lover of one of our nuns,” she thought, “who has come to keep an assignation,” and she was devout. Seized with horror, she began to tug with all her strength the rope of a little bell which hung in the great courtyard, and at once made din enough to arouse the dead.

“The fight begins,” said Giulio to his men; “look out for yourselves!”

He took his key, and, slipping his arm between the iron bars, opened the gate, to the complete despair of the young sister, who fell on her knees and began to recite the Hail Mary, crying out against the sacrilege. Again at this moment, Giulio ought to have silenced the girl, but had not the heart to do so: one of his men seized hold of her and clapped his hand to her mouth.

At that moment Giulio heard an arquebus fired in the passage behind him. Ugone had opened the main gate; the remainder of the soldiers were entering without a sound, when one of the bravi, less drunk than the rest, came up to one of the barred windows, and, in his astonishment at seeing so many people in the passage, forbade them with an oath to come any farther. The only thing was to make no answer and to continue to advance towards the iron gate; this was what the first of the soldiers did; but the man who came last of all, and who was one of the peasants recruited in the afternoon, fired a pistol shot at this servant who was speaking from the window, and killed him. This pistol shot, in the dead of night, and the shouts of the drunken men as they saw their comrade fall, awoke the soldiers of the convent, who were spending the night in bed, and had not had an opportunity of tasting Ugone's wine. Nine or ten of the bravi of the convent rushed into the passage half dressed, and began vigorously to attack Branciforte's men.

As we have said, this racket began at the moment when Giulio had succeeded in opening the iron gate. Followed by his two soldiers, he dashed into the garden, and ran towards the little door of the boarders' stair; but he was greeted by five or six pistol shots. His two men fell, he himself received a bullet in his right arm. These pistol shots had been fired by Signora de' Campireali's people, who, by her orders, were spending the night in the garden, authorised to do so by a special dispensation which she had obtained from the Bishop. Giulio ran by himself towards the little door, so well known to him, which led from the garden to the boarders' stair. He did all he could to force it open, but it was firmly shut. He searched for his men, who made no attempt to reply; they were dying; in the pitch darkness he ran into three of the Campireali servants against whom he defended himself with his knife.

He ran into the hall, towards the iron gate, to call his soldiers; he found this gate shut: the pair of heavy iron rods had been put in position and padlocked

by the old gardeners, who had been aroused by the young sister's pealing of the bell.

"I am cut off," Giulio said to himself.

He repeated this to his men; in vain did he attempt to force one of the padlocks with his sword: had he succeeded, he would have raised one of the iron rods, and opened one side of the gate. His sword broke in the ring of the padlock; at the same moment he was wounded in the shoulder by one of the servants who had come in from the garden; he turned round, and resting his back against the iron gate, found himself being attacked by a number of men. He defended himself with his dirk; fortunately, the darkness being unbroken, almost all the sword strokes landed on his coat of mail. He received a painful wound in the knee; he flung himself upon one of the men who had lunged too far to reach him with his sword, killed him by stabbing him in the face with his knife, and was lucky enough to gain possession of the man's sword. From that moment he thought himself safe; he took his stand on the left-hand side of the gate, towards the courtyard. His men, who had hastened to his assistance, fired five or six pistol shots between the iron bars of the gate and sent the servants flying. Nothing was visible in the hall except in the flash of these pistol shots.

"Do not fire in my direction!" cried Giulio to his men.

"Now you are caught like a mouse in a trap," the corporal said to him with the utmost coolness, speaking through the bars; "we have three men killed. We are going to break down the jamb of the gate on the opposite side to where you are; do not come near, the bullets will be falling on us; there seem to be some of the enemy in the garden still."

"Those rascally servants of the Campireali," said Giulio.

He was still speaking to the corporal, when further pistol shots, aimed at the sound of their voices and coming from the part of the hall that led to the garden, were fired at them. Giulio took shelter in the portress's lodge, which was on the left as one entered; to his great joy he found a lamp burning with an almost imperceptible glimmer before the image of the Madonna; he took it with many precautions not to extinguish it; he noticed with regret that he

was trembling. He examined the wound in his knee, which was giving him great pain; the blood was flowing copiously.

As he cast his eyes round him, he was greatly surprised at recognising, in a woman who had fainted in a wooden armchair, little Marietta, Elena's confidential maid; he shook her vigorously.

"Why, Signor Giulio," she exclaimed, weeping, "are you going to kill Marietta, your friend?"

"Nothing of the sort; say to Elena that I beg pardon for having disturbed her sleep, and bid her remember the Angelus on Monte Cavi. Here is a nosegay which I plucked in her garden at Albano; but it is stained a little with blood; wash it before you give it to her."

At that moment, he heard a volley of arquebus shots fired in the passage; the nuns' bravi were attacking his men.

"Tell me, where is the key of the little door?" he said to Marietta.

"I do not see it; but here are the keys of the padlocks of the iron bars which keep the great gate shut. You can get out."

Giulio took the keys and dashed out of the lodge.

"Stop trying to break down the wall," he said to his soldiers. "I have the key of the gate at last."

There was a moment of complete silence, while he tried to open a padlock with one of the small keys; he had mistaken the key, he tried the other; at length, he opened the padlock; but just as he was lifting the iron rod, he received a pistol shot, fired at him almost point blank, in his right arm. At once he felt that his arm refused to obey him.

"Lift up the iron valet," he cried to his men.

He had no need to tell them.

By the flash of the pistol shot, they had seen the hooked end of the iron rod almost out of the ring in the gate; when it was clear of the ring, they let it fall. Then it was possible to push open one side of the gate; the corporal entered, and said to Giulio, carefully lowering his voice:

“There is nothing more to be done, there are only three or four of us now unwounded, five are dead.”

“I am losing blood,” replied Giulio. “I feel that I am going to faint; tell them to carry me away.”

While Giulio was speaking to the gallant corporal, the soldiers in the guard-room fired three or four more arquebus shots, and the corporal fell dead. Fortunately, Ugone had heard the order given by Giulio, he called two of the soldiers by name, and these picked up their captain. As after all he did not faint, he ordered them to carry him to the end of the garden, to the little door. This order made the men swear; they obeyed, nevertheless.

“A hundred sequins to the man who opens that door!” cried Giulio.

But it resisted the efforts of three furious men. One of the old gardeners, installed in a window on the second floor, fired a number of pistol shots at them, which served to lighten their path.

After vain efforts to break down the door, Giulio fainted completely away; Ugone told the soldiers to carry the captain out as quickly as possible. He himself went into the portress’s lodge, out of which he flung little Marietta, telling her in a terrifying voice to make her escape, and never to say that she had recognised him. He pulled out the straw from the bed, broke several chairs and set fire to the room. When he saw the fire well started, he made off as fast as he could run, through a rain of arquebus shots fired by the bravi in the convent.

It was not until he had gone some hundred and fifty yards from the Visitation that he found the captain, who, in a dead faint, was being carried rapidly away. A few minutes later, they were out of the town; Ugone called a half, he had now only four soldiers with him; he sent two back into the town, with orders to fire their arquebuses every five minutes.

“Try to find your wounded comrades,” he told them, “and leave the town before daybreak; we are going to follow the path towards the Croce Rossa. If you can start a fire anywhere, do so without fail.”

When Giulio recovered consciousness, they had gone three leagues from the town, and the sun was already high above the horizon. Ugone made his report.

“Your troop consists now of only five men, of whom three are wounded. Two of the peasants who are alive have received a reward of two sequins each, and have fled; I have sent the two men who are not wounded to the nearest village to fetch a surgeon.”

The surgeon, an old man trembling with fear, arrived presently mounted upon a magnificent ass; the men had had to threaten to set fire to his house before he would make up his mind to come. They were obliged also to dose him with brandy to make him fit to work, so great was his fear. Finally he set to work; he told Giulio that his injuries were of no consequence.

“The wound in the knee is not dangerous,” he went on, “but it will make you limp all your life, if you do not keep absolutely still for the next two or three weeks.”

The surgeon dressed the wounds of the men. Ugone made a sign with his eye to Giulio; two sequins were bestowed on the surgeon, who was speechless with gratitude; then, on the pretext of thanking him, they made him drink such a quantity of brandy that finally he fell into a deep sleep. This was what they desired. They carried him into a neighbouring field, and wrapped four sequins in a scrap of paper which was slipped into his pocket: it was the price of his ass, on which were set Giulio and one of the soldiers who was wounded in the leg. They went to spend the period of the midday heat in an ancient ruin by the edge of a pond; they marched all night, avoiding the villages, which were few in number upon that road, and at length, on the third morning, at sunrise, Giulio, carried by his men, awoke in the heart of the forest of la Faggiola, in the charcoal-burner’s hut which was his headquarters.

VI

On the morning after the fight, the nuns of the Visitation were horrified to find nine dead bodies in their garden and in the passage that led from their outer gate to the gate with the iron bars; eight of their bravi were wounded. Never had there been such a panic in the convent: it was true that they had, now and again, heard arquebus shots fired in the square, but never such a quantity of shots fired in the garden, in the middle of the nuns' buildings and beneath their windows. The affair had lasted fully an hour and a half, and during that time the disorder had been complete inside the convent. Had Giulio Branciforte had the least understanding with any of the sisters or boarders, he must have been successful: all that was needed was to open to him one of the many doors that led into the garden; but, wild with indignation and with resentment of what he called the perjury of young Elena, Giulio had sought to carry everything before him by main force. He would have felt that he was failing in his duty to himself, had he confided his plan to anyone who could repeat it to Elena. And yet a single word to her little Marietta would have sufficed to assure his success: she would have opened one of the doors leading into the garden, and one man even appearing in the dormitories of the convent, with that terrible accompaniment of arquebus shots heard from without, would have been obeyed to the letter. At the sound of the first shot, Elena had trembled for the life of her lover, and her one thought had been to fly with him.

How are we to depict her despair when little Marietta told her of the fearful wound Giulio had received in his knee, from which she had seen the blood flowing in torrents? Elena detested her own cowardice and pusillanimity:

"I was weak enough to say a word to my mother, and Giulio's blood has been shed; he might have lost his life in that sublime assault in which it was his courage that did everything."

The bravi, when admitted to the parlour, had said to the nuns, who were all agog to hear them, that never in their lives had they witnessed valour comparable to that of the young man dressed as a courier who directed the efforts of the brigands. If all the rest listened to these tales with the keenest

interest, one may judge of the intense passion with which Elena asked these bravi for a detailed account of the young chief of the brigands. After the long stories which she made them, and also the old gardeners, tell her, she felt that she no longer loved her mother at all. There was indeed a moment of extremely heated discussion between these two women who had loved each other so tenderly on the eve of the fight; Signora de' Campireali was shocked by the bloodstains which she saw on the flowers of a certain nosegay from which Elena refused to be parted for a single instant.

"You ought to throw away those flowers covered with blood."

"It was I who caused that noble blood to be spilt, and it flowed because I was weak enough to say a word to you."

"You still love, your brother's murderer?"

"I love my husband, who, to my eternal misfortune, was attacked by my brother."

After this reply, not a single word passed between Signora de' Campireali and her daughter during the three more days which the Signora spent in the convent.

On the day following her departure, Elena managed to escape, taking advantage of the confusion that prevailed at the two gates of the convent, owing to the presence of a large number of masons who had been let into the garden and were engaged in erecting new fortifications there. Little Marietta and she were disguised as workmen. But the townsfolk were keeping a strict guard at the gates of the town. Elena had considerable difficulty in getting out. Finally, the same small merchant who had conveyed Branciforte's letters to her consented to let her pass as his daughter, and to escort her as far as Albano. There Elena found a hiding-place with her nurse, whom her generosity had enabled to open a little shop. No sooner had she arrived, than she wrote to Branciforte, and the nurse found, not without great trouble, a man willing to risk his life by entering the forest of la Faggiola without having the password of Colonna's troops.

The messenger dispatched by Elena returned after three days, in great consternation; for one tiling, he had been unable to find Branciforte, and, as the questions which he continued to put with regard to the young captain had ended by making him suspected, he had been obliged to take flight.

“There can be no doubt about it, poor Giulio is dead,” Elena said to herself, “and it is I that have killed him! Such was bound to be the consequence of my wretched weakness and cowardice; he should have loved a strong woman, the daughter of one of Prince Colonna’s captains.”

The nurse thought that Elena was going to die. She went up to the Capuchin convent, standing by the road cut in the rock, where Fabio and his father had once met the lovers in the middle of the night. The nurse spoke at great length to her confessor, and, beneath the seal of the sacrament, admitted to him that young Elena de’ Campireali wished to go and join Giulio Branciforte, her husband, adding that she was prepared to place in the church of the convent a silver lamp of the value of one hundred Spanish piastres.

“A hundred piastres!” replied the friar angrily. “And what will become of our convent, if we incur the anger of Signor de’ Campireali? It was not a hundred piastres, but a good thousand, that he gave us for going to fetch his son’s body from the battlefield at the Ciampi, not to speak of the wax.”

It must be said to the honour of the convent that two elderly friars, having discovered where precisely Elena was, went down to Albano and paid her a visit, originally with the intention of inducing her by hook or crook to take up her abode in the palazzo of her family: they knew that they would be richly rewarded by Signora de’ Campireali. The whole of Albano was ringing with the report of Elena’s flight and of the lavish promises made by her mother to anyone who could give her news of her daughter. But the two friars were so touched by the despair of poor Elena, who believed Giulio Branciforte to be dead, that, so far from betraying her by revealing to her mother the place in which she had taken refuge, they agreed to serve as her escort as far as the fortress of la Petrella. Elena and Marietta, once more disguised as workmen, repaired on foot and by night to a certain spring in the forest of la Faggiola, a league from Albano. The friars had sent mules there to meet them, and, when day had come, the party set out for la Petrella. The friars, who were known to be under the Prince’s protection, were

greeted everywhere with respect by the soldiers whom they met in the forest; but it was not so with the two little men who accompanied them: the soldiers began by staring at them in the most forbidding manner and came up to them, then burst out laughing and congratulated the friars on the charms of their muleteers.

“Silence, impious wretches; know that all is being done under Prince Colonna’s orders,” replied the friars as they proceeded on their way.

But poor Elena was unlucky; the Prince was not at la Petrella, and when, three days later, on his return, he at length granted her an audience, he showed himself most stern.

“Why do you come here, Signorina? What means this ill-advised action? Your woman’s chatter has cost the lives of seven of the bravest men in Italy, and that is a thing which no man in his senses will ever forgive you. In this world, one must wish a thing or not wish it. It is doubtless in consequence of similar chatter that Giulio Branci-forte has just been declared guilty of sacrilege, and sentenced to be tortured for two hours with red-hot pincers, and then burned as a Jew, he, one of the best Christians I know! How could anyone, without some abominable chattering on your part, have invented so horrible a lie as to say that Giulio Branciforte was at Castro on the day of the attack on the convent? All my men will tell you that they saw him that day here at la Petrella, and that in the evening I sent him to Velletri.

“But is he alive?” Elena cried for the tenth time, bursting into tears.

“He is dead to you,” replied the Prince. “You shall never set eyes on him again. I advise you to return to your convent at Castro; try to commit no more indiscretions, and I order you to leave la Petrella within an hour from now. Above all, never mention to anyone that you have seen me, or I shall find a way of punishing you.”

Poor Elena was broken-hearted at meeting with such a reception from that famous Prince Colonna, for whom Giulio felt so much respect, and whom she loved because Giulio loved him.

Whatever Prince Colonna might choose to say, this action on Elena's part was by no means ill-advised. If she had come to la Petrella three days earlier, she would have found there Giulio Branciforte; the wound in his knee rendered him incapable of marching, and the Prince had him carried to the market town of Avezzano, in the Kingdom of Naples. At the first news of the terrible sentence upon Giulio Branciforte which, purchased by Signor de' Campireali, denounced him as guilty of sacrilege and of violating a convent, the Prince had seen that, should he have occasion to protect Branciforte, he would have to reckon without three-fourths of his men. This was a sin against the Madonna, to whose protection each of these brigands supposed himself to have a special claim. Had there been a bargello in Rome sufficiently daring to come and arrest Giulio Branciforte in the heart of the forest of la Faggiola, he might have been successful.

On reaching Avezzano, Giulio took the name of Fontana, and the men who carried him there were discreet. On their return to la Petrella, they announced with sorrow that Giulio had died on the way, and from that moment each of the Prince's soldiers knew that a dagger would find its way to the heart of any who should pronounce that fatal name.

It was in vain therefore that Elena, on her return to Albano, wrote letter after letter, and spent, on their transmission to Branciforte, all the sequins that she possessed. The two aged friars, who had become her friends, for extreme beauty, says the Florentine chronicler, cannot fail to exercise some sway, even over hearts hardened by the vilest selfishness and hypocrisy; the two friars, we say, warned the poor girl that it was in vain that she might seek to convey a word to Branciforte: Colonna had declared that he was dead, and certainly Giulio would not appear in public again unless the Prince chose. Elena's nurse informed her, with tears, that her mother had at length succeeded in discovering her retreat, and that the strictest orders had been given that she should be forcibly taken to the palazzo Campireali, in Albano. Elena realised that, once inside that palazzo, her imprisonment might be one of unbounded severity, and that they would succeed in cutting her off absolutely from any communication with the outer world, whereas at the Convent of Castro she would have, for receiving and sending letters, the same facilities as all the other nuns. Besides, and this was what brought her to a decision, it was in the garden of that convent that Giulio had shed his blood for her: she could gaze once more upon that wooden armchair in the

portress's lodge on which he had sat for a moment to examine the wound in his knee; it was there that he had given Marietta that nosegay stained with blood which never left her person. And so she went sadly back to the Convent of Castro, and here one might bring her history to an end: it would be well for her, and for the reader also. For. we are now about to observe the gradual degradation of a noble and generous nature.

Prudent measures and the falsehoods of civilisation, which for the future are going to assail her on every side, will take the place of the sincere impulses of vigorous and natural passions. The Roman chronicler here sets down a most artless reflexion: because a woman has taken the trouble to bring into the world a beautiful daughter, she assumes that she has the talent necessary to direct that daughter's life, and because, when the daughter is six years old, she said to her and was justified in saying: "Miss, put your collar straight," when the daughter is eighteen and she herself fifty, when the daughter has as much intelligence as her mother and more, the mother, carried away by the mania for ruling, thinks that she has the right to direct her daughter's life and even to employ falsehood. We shall see that it was Vittoria Carafa, Elena's mother, who, by a succession of adroit measures, most skilfully planned, brought about the death of that dearly loved daughter, after keeping her in misery for twelve years, a lamentable result of the mania for ruling.

Before his death, Signor de' Campireali had had the joy of seeing published in Rome the sentence that condemned Giulio Branciforte to be tortured for two hours with red-hot irons in the principal squares of Rome, then to be burned on a slow fire, and his ashes flung into the Tiber. The frescoes in the cloisters of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, still survive to show us how these cruel sentences upon the sacrilegious were carried out. As a rule, a numerous guard was required to prevent the outraged populace from forestalling the headsmen in their office. Everyone regarded himself as an intimate friend of the Madonna. Signor de' Campireali had had the sentence read over to him again a few moments before his death, and had given the avvocato who had procured it his fine estate lying between Albano and the sea. This avvocato was by no means devoid of merit. Branciforte was condemned to this terrible punishment, and yet no witness had professed to have recognised him beneath the clothing of that young man disguised as a courier, who seemed to be directing with such authority the movements of the assailants. The magnificence of the reward set all the intriguers of Rome

in a stir. There was then at court a certain fratone (monk), a deep man and one capable of anything, even of forcing the Pope to give him the Hat; he looked after the affairs of Prince Colonna, and that terrible client earned him great consideration. When Signora de' Campireali saw her daughter once more safely at Castro, she sent for this fratone.

"Your Reverence will be lavishly rewarded, if he will be so kind as to help to bring to a successful issue the very simple affair which I am going to explain to him. In a few days' time, the sentence condemning Giulio Branciforte to a terrible punishment is to be published and made effective in the Kingdom of Naples also. I request Your Reverence to read this letter from the Viceroy, a relative of mine, by the way, who deigns to inform me of this news. In what land can Branciforte seek an asylum? I shall have fifty thousand piastres conveyed to the Prince, with the request that he will give the whole sum, or a part of it, to Giulio Branciforte, on condition that he goes to serve the King of Spain, my Sovereign, against the rebels in Flanders. The Viceroy will give a brevet as captain to Branciforte, and in order that the sentence for sacrilege, which I hope to have made operative in Spain also, may not hamper him at all in his career, he will go by the name of Barone Lizzara; that is a small property which I have in the Abruzzi, and shall find a way of making over to him, by means of fictitious sales. I do not suppose Your Reverence has ever seen a mother treat her son's murderer like this. For five hundred piastres we could long since have been rid of the hateful creature; but we had no wish to fall foul of Colonna. Be so good, therefore, as to point out to him that my respect for his rights is costing me sixty or eighty thousand piastres. I never wish to hear that Branciforte mentioned again; that is all, and you will present my compliments to the Prince."

The fratone said that in two or three days he would be going in the direction of Ostia, and Signora de' Campireali handed him a ring worth a thousand piastres.

A few days later, the fratone reappeared in Rome, and told Signora de' Campireali that he had not informed the Prince of her plan, but that within a month young Branciforte would have taken ship for Barcelona, where she would be able to convey to him, through one of the bankers of that city, the sum of fifty thousand piastres.

The Prince found considerable difficulty in handling Giulio. Whatever the risk he must for the future run in Italy, the young lover could not make up his mind to leave that country. In vain did the Prince suggest to him that Signora de' Campireali might die; in vain did he promise that, in any event, after three years, Giulio might return to visit his native land; Giulio shed copious tears, but consent he would not. The Prince was obliged to request him to go, as a personal service to himself; Giulio could refuse nothing to his father's friend; but, first and foremost, he wished to take his orders from Elena. The Prince deigned to take charge of a long letter; and, what was more, gave Giulio permission to write to her from Flanders once every month. At length the despairing lover embarked for Barcelona. All his letters were burned by the Prince, who did not wish Giulio ever to return to Italy. We have forgotten to mention that, although anything like ostentation was utterly alien to his character, the Prince had felt himself obliged to say, in order to bring matters to a successful issue, that it was he himself who thought fit to assure a small fortune of fifty thousand piastres to the only son of one of the most faithful servants of the house of Colonna. Poor Elena was treated like a Princess in the Convent of Castro. Her father's death had put her in possession of a considerable fortune, and a vast inheritance would accrue to her in time. On the occasion of her father's death she made a gift of five ells of black cloth to all such of the inhabitants of Castro or of the district who announced that they wished to wear mourning for Signor de' Campireali. She was still in the first days of her bereavement when, by the hand of a complete stranger, a letter was brought to her from Giulio. It would be hard to describe the rapture with which that letter was opened, though no less hard to describe the intense grief which followed her perusal of it. And yet it was indeed in Giulio's handwriting; she examined it with the closest scrutiny. The letter spoke of love; but what love, great heavens! Nevertheless, it was Signora de' Campireali, who was so clever, that had composed it. Her intention was to begin the correspondence with seven or eight letters of impassioned love; she wished thus to prepare the way for the next letters, in which the writer's passion would seem to die gradually away.

We may pass briefly over ten years of an unhappy life. Elena supposed herself to be completely forgotten, and yet had scornfully refused the overtures of the most distinguished young noblemen in Rome. She did, however, hesitate for a moment, when mention was made to her of young Ottavio Colonna, the eldest son of the famous Fabrizio, who had received

her so coldly, long ago, at la Petrella. She felt that, being absolutely obliged to take a husband in order to provide a protector for the lands which she owned in the Roman States and in the Kingdom of Naples, it would be less repulsive to her to bear the name of a man whom Giulio had once loved. Had she agreed to this marriage, Elena would very soon have found out the truth about Giulio Branciforte. The old Prince Fabrizio spoke often and with enthusiasm of the superhuman valour shown by Colonel Lizzara (Giulio Branciforte), who, just like the heroes of the old romances, was seeking to distract his mind by gallant actions from the unfortunate love affair which made him indifferent to all pleasures. He imagined Elena to be long since married; Signora de' Campireali had surrounded him, too, with falsehood.

Elena was half reconciled to that wiliest of mothers. She. passionately anxious to see her daughter married, asked her friend, old Cardinal Santi–Quattro, Protector of the Visitation, who was going to Castro, to announce in confidence to the senior sisters in the convent that his visit to them had been delayed by an act of grace. The good Pope Gregory XIII, moved to pity for the soul of a brigand named Giulio Branciforte, who had once tried to break into their cloister, had been pleased, on learning of his death, to revoke the sentence that declared him guilty of sacrilege, being fully convinced that, beneath the load of such a condemnation, he would never be able to escape from Purgatory, assuming that Branciforte, taken by surprise in Mexico and massacred by rebellious natives, had been so fortunate as to go no farther than Purgatory. This news put the whole Convent of Castro in a stir; it reached the ears of Elena, who at once began to indulge in all the foolish acts of vanity that the possession of a great fortune can inspire in a person who is profoundly vexed. From that moment, she never left her room. It should be explained that, in order to be able to install herself in the little portress's lodge in which Giulio had taken refuge for a moment on the night of the assault, she had had half the convent rebuilt. With infinite pains and, in the sequel, a scandal which it was extremely difficult to hush up, she had succeeded in laying hands on, and in taking into her service the three bravi employed by Branciforte who still survived out of the five that had got away from the fight at Castro. Among these was Ugone, now old and crippled by wounds. The arrival of these three men had caused considerable murmuring; but in the end the fear that Elena's proud nature inspired in the whole convent had prevailed, and every day they were to be seen, dressed in her

livery, coming to take her orders at the outer grill, and often giving long answers to her questions, which were always on the same subject.

After the six months of seclusion and detachment from all the things of this world which followed the announcement of Giulio's death, the first sensation to awaken this heart already broken by a misfortune without remedy and a long period of boredom was one of vanity.

A little time since, the Abbess had died. According to custom, Cardinal Santi–Quattro, who was still Protector of the Visitation, despite his great age of ninety-two years, had drawn up the list of the three ladies from among whom the Pope would select an Abbess. It required some very serious reason to make His Holiness read the last two names on the list; as a rule he contented himself with running his pen through those names, and the nomination was made.

One day, Elena was at the window of what had been the portress's lodge, and had now become one end of the wing of new buildings erected by her. This window stood not more than two feet above the passage once watered by the blood of Giulio and now forming part of the garden. Elena's eyes were firmly fixed on the ground. The three ladies whose names, as had been known for some days, formed the Cardinal's list of possible successors to the late Abbess, came past Elena's window. She did not see them, and in consequence could not greet them. One of the three ladies was offended, and remarked in a loud voice to the other two:

"A fine thing for a boarder to flaunt her room before everybody."

Aroused by these words, Elena raised her eyes and encountered three hostile stares.

"Very well," she said to herself as she shut the window without greeting them, "I've played the lamb in this convent quite long enough; it's time I became a wolf, if only to give a little variety to the curious gentlemen of the town."

An hour later, one of her servants, dispatched as a courier, carried the following letter to her mother, who for the last ten years had been living in

Rome, and had managed to acquire great influence there.

“Most respected Mother,

“Every year you give me three hundred thousand francs upon my birthday; I make use of that money to do foolish things, perfectly honourable things I must say, but foolish nevertheless. Although it is long since you have mentioned the matter, I know that there are two ways in which I can shew my gratitude for all the thoughtful care you have taken of me. I will never marry, but I would gladly become Abbess of this Convent; what has given me the idea is that the three ladies whose names our Cardinal Santi–Quattro has placed on the list which he will present to His Holiness are my enemies, and, whichever of them be chosen, I may expect every sort of annoyance. Offer the usual flowers on my birthday to all the right people; let us first have the nomination postponed for six months — which will make the Prioress of the Convent, my dearest friend, who is now holding the reins, wild with joy. That alone will afford me some happiness, and it is very seldom that I can use that word in speaking of your daughter. I think my idea absurd; but if you see any chance of success, in three days I will take the white veil, eight years of residence in the convent, without a night’s absence, entitling me to six months’ exemption. The dispensation is never refused, and costs forty scudi.

“I am with respect, my venerable mother,” etc.

On reading this letter, Signora de’ Campireali’s joy knew no bounds. When it reached her, she was bitterly regretting that she had sent word to her daughter of Branciforte’s death; she foresaw some mad action, she was even afraid lest her daughter might decide to go to Mexico to visit the spot where Branciforte was said to have been massacred, in which case it was highly probable that she would learn in Madrid the true name of Colonel Lizzara. On the other hand, what her daughter demanded in the letter was the most difficult, one might even say the most preposterous thing in the world. That a young girl who was not even in religion, and was known only for a mad love affair with a brigand, should be set at the head of a convent in which all the Roman Princes had relatives professed! “But,” thought Signora de’ Campireali, “they say that every cause can be pleaded, and, if so, won.” In her reply, Vittoria Carafa gave her daughter grounds for hope; that daughter,

as a rule, wished only for the most absurd things, but, on the other hand, she very soon tired of them. In the evening, while seeking any information that, nearly or remotely, bore upon the Convent of Castro, she learned that for some months past her friend Cardinal Santi–Quattro had been extremely cross: he wished to marry his niece to Don Ottavio Colonna, the eldest son of that Prince Fabrizio, who has been so often mentioned in the course of this narrative. The Prince offered him his second son, Don Lorenzo, because, in order to bolster up his own fortune, fantastically compromised by the war which the King of Naples and the Pope, reconciled at last, were waging against the brigands of la Faggiola, it was essential that his eldest son's wife should bring a dowry of six hundred thousand piastres (3,210,000 francs) to the House of Colonna. Now Cardinal Santi–Quattro, even by disinheriting in the most preposterous fashion all the rest of his family, could only offer a fortune of three hundred and eighty or four hundred thousand piastres.

Vittoria Carafa spent the evening and part of the night in having these reports confirmed by all the friends of old Santi–Quattro. Next day, about seven o'clock, she sent in her name to the old Cardinal.

"Your Eminence," she said to him, "we are neither of us young; it is useless our trying to deceive one another by giving fine names to things that are not fine; I have come to propose to you something mad; all that I can say in defence of it is that it is not abominable; but I must admit that I find it supremely ridiculous. When there was some talk of a marriage between Don Ottavio Colonna and my daughter Elena, I formed an affection for the young man, and, on the day of his marriage, I will hand over to you two hundred thousand piastres in land or in money, which I shall ask you to convey to him. But, in order to enable a poor widow like myself to make so enormous a sacrifice, I require that my daughter Elena, who is at present twenty-seven years old, and since the age of nineteen has never spent a night out of the convent, be made Abbess of Castro; but first of all the election must be postponed for six months; it is all quite canonical."

"What are you saying, Signora?" cried the old Cardinal in horror; "His Holiness himself could not perform what you come here and ask of a poor, helpless old man."

“Did I not tell Your Eminence that the thing was absurd: fools will call it madness; but the people that are well informed of what goes on at court will say that our Excellent Prince, good Pope Gregory XIII, has chosen to reward Your Eminence’s long and loyal services by facilitating a marriage which the whole of Rome knows Your Eminence to desire. Besides, it is perfectly possible, quite canonical, I will vouch for it; my daughter is going to take the white veil tomorrow.”

“But the simony, Signora!” cried the old man in a terrible voice.

Signora de’ Campireali prepared to go.

“What is that paper you are leaving behind you?”

“It is the list of the estates which I should present as the equivalent of two hundred thousand piastres, should that be preferred to ready money; the change of proprietor could be kept secret for a very long time: for instance, the House of Colonna might bring actions against me which I should proceed to lose. . . .”

“But the simony, Signora, the fearful simony!”

“The first thing to be done is to put off the election for six months; tomorrow I shall call to receive Your Eminence’s orders.”

I feel that there is need of an explanation, for readers born north of the Alps, of the almost official tone of several passages in this dialogue: let me remind them that, in strictly Catholic countries, the majority of discussions of unpleasant subjects end in the confessional; and then it is anything but a trivial matter whether one has made use of a respectful or of an ironical expression.

In the course of the following day, Vittoria Carafa learned that, owing to a grave error in point of fact which had been discovered in the list of three ladies submitted to fill the vacant post of Abbess of Castro, that election was postponed for six months: the second lady upon the list had a renegade in her family; one of her great-uncles had turned Protestant at Udine.

Signora de' Campireali felt herself impelled to approach Prince Fabrizio Colonna, to whose House she was about to offer so notable an increase in its patrimony. After trying for two days, she succeeded in obtaining an appointment in a village near Rome, but she came away quite alarmed by her audience; she had found the Prince, ordinarily so calm, so greatly taken up with the military glory of Colonel Lizzara (Giulio Branciforte), that she had decided it to be completely useless to ask him to keep silent on that head. The Colonel was to him like a son, and, what was more, a favourite pupil. The Prince spent his time reading and re-reading certain letters that came to him from Flanders. What would become of the cherished plan to which Signora de' Campireali had sacrificed so much in the last ten years, were her daughter to learn of the existence and fame of Colonel Lizzara?

I must pass over in silence a number of circumstances which do, indeed, portray the manners of that age but seem to me wearisome to relate. The author of the Roman manuscript has taken endless pains to arrive at the exact date of these details which I suppress.

Two years after Signora de' Campireali's meeting with Prince Colonna, Elena was Abbess of Castro; but the old Cardinal Santi–Quattro had died of grief after this great act of simony. At that time Castro had as Bishop the handsomest man at the Papal Court, Monsignor Francesco Cittadini, a noble of the city of Milan. This young man, remarkable for his modest graces and his tone of dignity, had frequent dealings with the Abbess of the Visitation, especially with regard to the new cloister with which she proposed to adorn her convent. This young Bishop Cittadini, then twenty-nine years old, fell madly in love with the beautiful Abbess. In the legal proceedings which followed, a year later, a number of nuns, whose evidence was taken, report that the Bishop made his visits to the Convent as frequent as possible, and often said to their Abbess: "Elsewhere I command, and, I am ashamed to say, find some pleasure in doing so; in your presence, I obey like a slave, but with a pleasure that far surpasses that of commanding elsewhere. I find myself under the influence of a superior being; were I to try, I could have no other will than hers, and I would rather see myself, to all eternity, the last of her slaves than reign as king out of her sight."

The witnesses relate that often, in the middle of these elegant speeches, the Abbess would order him to be silent, and in harsh language which implied

scorn.

“To tell the truth,” another witness goes on, “the Signora used to treat him like a servant; when that happened the poor Bishop would lower his eyes, and begin to weep, but he never went away. He found a fresh excuse every day for coming to the Convent, which greatly scandalised the nuns’ confessors and the enemies of the Abbess. But the Lady Abbess was strongly defended by the Prioress, her dearest friend, who carried on the internal government under her immediate orders.

“You know, my noble sisters (she used to say), that ever since that thwarted passion which our Abbess felt in her earliest girlhood for a soldier of fortune, her ideas have always been very odd; but you all know that there is this remarkable element in her character, that she never changes her mind about people for whom she has shown her contempt. Well, never, in the whole of her life, probably, has she said so many insulting words as she has uttered in our presence to poor Monsignor Cittadini. Every day, we see him submit to treatment which makes us blush for his high office.”

“Yes,” replied the scandalised sisters, “but he comes again the day after; so, after all, he cannot be so ill treated, and, however that may be, this suggestion of intrigue is damaging to the reputation of the Holy Order of the Visitation.”

The sternest master would never address to the clumsiest servant one quarter of the abuse which, day after day, the proud Abbess heaped upon this young Bishop whose manners were so unctuous; but he was in love, and had brought from his own country the fundamental maxim that once an undertaking of this sort has been begun, one has to think only about the end and not to consider the means.

“After all,” said the Bishop to his confidant, Cesare del Bene, “the true scorn is that felt for the lover who has desisted from the attack before being compelled to do so by superior forces.”

Now my sad task will be confined to giving an extract, of necessity extremely dry, from the criminal proceedings which led to Elena’s death. These proceedings, which I have read in a library the name of which I am

obliged to keep private, occupy no fewer than eight folio volumes. The questions and arguments are in the Latin tongue, the answers in Italian. I find that during the month of November, 1572, about eleven o'clock at night, the young Bishop betook himself alone to the door of the church by which the faithful are admitted throughout the day; the Abbess herself opened this door to him, and allowed him to follow her. She received him in a room which she often occupied, one that communicated by a secret door with the galleries built over the aisles of the church. Barely an hour elapsed before the Bishop, in great bewilderment, was sent packing; the Abbess herself conducted him to the door of the church, and addressed him in these very words:

"Return to your Palace, and leave my sight at once. Farewell, Monsignore; you fill me with horror; I feel that I have given myself to a lackey."

Three months later, however, came Carnival. The people of Castro were famous for the festivities which they held among themselves at this season, the whole town being filled with the clamour of the masquerades. Not one of these failed to pass beneath a little window which gave a feeble light to a certain stable in the Convent. We need not be surprised to hear that three months before Carnival this stable had been converted into a parlour, which was never empty during the days of masquerade. In the midst of all the popular absurdities, the Bishop came past in his coach; the Abbess made him a signal, and, the following night, at one o'clock, he appeared without fail at the door of the church. He entered, but, within three-quarters of an hour, was angrily dismissed. Since the first assignation, in the month of November, he had continued to come to the Convent almost every week. A slight air of rather foolish triumph was to be observed on his face; this everyone noticed, but it had the special effect of greatly shocking the proud nature of the young Abbess. On Easter Monday, among other occasions, she treated him like the meanest of mankind, and addressed to him words which the humblest workman in the Convent would not have borne. Nevertheless, a few days later, she gave him a signal, on receiving which the handsome Bishop presented himself without fail at the door of the church; she had sent for him to let him know that she was with child. On hearing this, says the official account, the young man turned pale with horror and became absolutely stupid with fear. The Abbess took fever; she sent for the doctor, and made no mystery to him about her condition. The man knew his patient's generous

nature, and promised to help her out of the difficulty. He began by putting her in touch with a woman of humble station, young and good looking, who, without bearing the title of midwife, had the necessary acquirements. Her husband was a baker. Elena was taken with the conversation of this woman, who informed her that, in order to carry out the plans by which she hoped to save her, it was necessary that she should have two other women in her confidence inside the Convent.

“A woman like yourself, well and good, but one of my equals? Never! Leave my presence.”

The midwife withdrew. But, a few hours later, Elena, feeling it not to be prudent to expose herself to the risk of the woman’s chattering, summoned the doctor, who sent the woman back to the Convent, where she was liberally rewarded. This woman swore that, even had she not been called back, she would never have divulged the secret that had been confided to her; but she declared once again that, if there were not, inside the Convent, two women devoted to the Abbess’s interests and conversant with everything, she herself could have no hand in the matter. (No doubt, she was thinking of the possible charge of infanticide.) After prolonged reflexion, the Abbess decided to entrust this terrible secret to Donna Vittoria, Prioress of the Convent, of the ducal family of C —— — and to Donna Bernards, daughter of the Marchese P —— — . She made them swear on their breviaries that they would never utter a word, even at the stool of penitence, of what she was about to confide to them. The ladies stood frozen with terror. They admit, in their examination, that, having in mind the proud nature of their Abbess, they expected to hear a confession of murder. The Abbess said to them, quite simply and coolly:

“I have failed in all my duties; I am with child.”

Donna Vittoria, the Prioress, deeply moved and troubled on account of the ties of friendship which for so many years had bound her to Elena, and not urged by any idle curiosity, exclaimed with tears in her eyes:

“And who is the bold wretch that has committed this crime?”

“I have not told even my confessor; judge whether I am likely to tell you!”

The two ladies at once began to consider the best way of keeping this fatal secret from the rest of the convent. They decided first of all that the Abbess's bed should be removed from her own room, at the very centre of the building, to the Pharmacy, which had just been installed in the most remote part of the Convent, on the third floor of the great wing erected by Elena's generosity. It was in this spot that the Abbess gave birth to a male child. For three weeks the baker's wife had been concealed in the Prioress's apartment. As this woman was hurrying swiftly along the cloister carrying the child, it began to cry, and in her terror she took shelter in the cellar. An hour later, Donna Bernarda, assisted by the doctor, managed to open a little gate in the garden wall; the baker's wife hurriedly left the Convent, and, shortly afterwards, the town. On reaching the open country, still pursued by a wild terror, she took refuge in a little cave to which chance led her among some rocks. The Abbess wrote to Cesare del Bene, the Bishop's confidant and head valet, who hastened to the cave indicated; he was on horseback; he took the infant in his arms, and set off at a gallop for Montefiascone. The child was baptised there in the Church of Saint Margaret, and received the name of Alessandro. The landlady of the local inn had procured a nurse, on whom Cesare bestowed eight scudi: a crowd of women, who had gathered outside the church during the ceremony of baptism, called out persistently to Signor Cesare, demanding the name of the child's father.

"He is a great gentleman of Rome," Cesare told them, "who has allowed himself to make free with a poor village girl like yourselves."

So saying, he vanished.

All was going well so far in that immense convent, peopled with more than three hundred inquisitive women; no one had seen anything, no one had heard anything. But the Abbess had given the doctor some handfuls of sequins newly struck from the mint in Rome. The doctor gave several of these pieces to the baker's wife. The woman was pretty and her husband jealous; he searched in her box, found these pieces of gold that shone so brightly, and, supposing them to be the price of her shame, forced her, with a knife at her throat, to tell him from whence they came. After some equivocation, the woman confessed the truth, and peace was made. The couple then began to discuss the use to which they should put so large a sum. The wife wished to pay various debts; but the husband thought it better to

buy a mule, which was done. This mule created a scandal among the neighbours, who knew well the poverty of the couple. All the gossips in the town, friend and foe alike, came in turn to ask the baker's wife who was the generous lover who had enabled her to buy a mule. The woman, losing her temper, sometimes replied by telling the truth. One day when Cesare del Bene had been to see the child and came to give an account of his visit to the Abbess, she, although extremely unwell, dragged herself to the grating, and reproached him for the want of discretion shewn by the agents whom he employed. The Bishop, meanwhile, fell ill with fear; he wrote to his brothers in Milan to inform them of the false accusation that was being levelled against him: he appealed to them to come to his rescue. Although seriously ill, he made up his mind to leave Castro; but, before starting, he wrote to the Abbess:

"You know already that all that happened is public property. So, if you have any interest in saving not only my reputation, but perhaps my life, and in order to avoid a greater scandal, you might lay the blame on Gianbattista Doleri, who died two days ago; so that if, in this way, you do not repair your own honour, mine at least shall be no longer imperilled."

The Bishop summoned Don Luigi, Confessor to the Monastery of Castro.

"Deliver this," he said, "into the Lady Abbess's own hands."

She, upon reading this atrocious missive, cried out in the hearing of all that happened to be in the room:

"Thus the foolish virgins deserve to be treated who set the beauty of the body above that of the soul."

The rumour of all that was occurring at Castro came rapidly to the ears of the terrible Cardinal Farnese (he had given himself that reputation some years back, because he hoped, at the next conclave, to have the support of the zealous Cardinals). He at once gave orders to the podestà of Castro to have Bishop Cittadini arrested. All the Bishop's servants, fearing the question, took flight. Cesare del Bene alone remained faithful to his master, and swore to him that he would die in torments sooner than reveal anything that might damage him. Cittadini, seeing himself under close guard in his

own Palace, wrote again to his brothers, who arrived in haste from Milan. They found him detained in the Ronciglione prison.

I see from the Abbess's first examination that, while admitting her crime, she denied having had relations with the Bishop; her paramour had been Gianbattista Doleri, lawyer to the Convent.

On the 9th of September, 1575, Gregory XIII ordered that the trial should proceed with all haste and with the utmost rigour. A criminal judge, a fiscal and a commissary betook themselves to Castro and Ronciglione. Cesare del Bene, the Bishop's head valet, admitted only that he had taken an infant to a nurse. He was examined in the presence of Donna Vittoria and Donna Bernarda. He was put to the torture on consecutive days; his sufferings were acute; but, true to his word, he admitted only what it was impossible to deny, and the fiscal could extract nothing from him.

When it came to Donna Vittoria and Donna Bernarda, who had witnessed the tortures inflicted on Cesare, they admitted all that they had done. All the nuns were asked the name of the author of the crime; the majority replied that they had heard it said that it was the Bishop. One of the Sister Portresses repeated the offensive words which the Abbess had used to the Bishop when shewing him out of the church. She added: "When people talk in that tone, it means that they have long been making love to one another. And indeed Monsignore, who as a rule was remarkable for his excessive self-assurance, had quite a shamefaced air as he left the church,"

One of the sisters, examined in front of the instruments of torture, replied that the author of the crime must be the cat, because the Abbess had it constantly in her arms and was always fondling it. Another sister asserted that the author of the crime must be the wind, because, on days when there was a wind, the Abbess was happy and in a good humour; she would expose herself to the force of the wind on a belvedere which she had had built on purpose; and, when anyone came to ask a favour of her in this spot, she never refused it. The baker's wife, the nurse, the gossips of Montefiascone, frightened by the tortures which they had seen inflicted on Cesare, told the truth.

The young Bishop was ill or feigning illness at Ronciglione, which gave his brothers, supported by the credit and secret influence of Signora de' Campireali, an opportunity of prostrating themselves more than once at the Pope's feet, and asking him that the proceedings might be suspended until the Bishop should have recovered his health. Whereupon the terrible Cardinal Farnese increased the number of the soldiers that were guarding him in his prison. As the Bishop could not be examined, the commissioners began all their sittings by subjecting the Abbess to a fresh examination. One day, after her mother had told her to have courage and to deny everything, she admitted all.

"Why did you first of all inculpate Gianbattista Doleri?"

"Out of pity for the Bishop's cowardice, and, besides, if he succeeds in saving his precious life, he will be able to provide for my son."

After this admission, the Abbess was confined in a room in the Convent of Castro, the walls of which, as well as its vaulting, were eight feet thick; the nuns would never speak of this dungeon without terror, and it went by the name of the monks' room; watch was kept there over the Abbess by three women.

The Bishop's health having slightly improved, three hundred sbirri or soldiers came for him to Ronciglione, and he was transported to Rome in a litter; he was confined in the prison called Corte Savella. A few days later, the sisters also were taken to Rome; the Abbess was placed in the Monastery of Santa Marta. Four sisters were inculpated: Donna Vittoria and Donna Bernarda, the sister through whom messages passed, and the portress who had heard the offensive words addressed to the Bishop by the Abbess.

The Bishop was examined by the Auditor of the Chamber, one of the chief personages in the judiciary. Torture was applied once again to the unfortunate Cesare del Bene, who not only admitted nothing, but said things which caused inconvenience to the public ministry; these earned him a fresh dose of torture. This preliminary punishment was inflicted similarly upon Donna Vittoria and Donna Bernarda. The Bishop denied everything, with vituperation, but with a fine stubbornness; he gave an account, in the fullest

detail, of all that he had done upon the three evenings which he was known to have spent with the Abbess.

Finally the Abbess and Bishop were confronted, and, albeit she continued to tell the truth, she was subjected to torture. As she repeated what she had always said from her first confession, the Bishop, sticking to his part, covered her with abuse.

After a number of other measures, reasonable enough in principle, but marred by that spirit of cruelty which, after the reigns of Charles V and Philip II, prevailed too often in the Italian courts, the Bishop was sentenced to undergo perpetual imprisonment in the Castel Sant' Angelo; the Abbess to be detained for the term of her life in the Convent of Santa Marta, where she was. But already Signora de' Campireali, in the hope of saving her daughter, had set to work to have a subterranean passage burrowed. This passage started from one of those sewers which are relics of the splendour of ancient Rome, and was to end in the deep cellar in which were deposited the mortal remains of the nuns of Santa Marta. This passage, which was barely two feet in width, was walled with planks, to keep back the earth on either side, and was roofed, as it advanced, with pairs of planks arranged like the sides of a capital A.

The tunnel was being bored about thirty feet below ground. The important thing was to carry it in the right direction; at every moment, wells and the foundations of old buildings obliged the workmen to turn aside. Another great difficulty arose as to the disposal of the earth, with which they did not know what to do; it appears that they sprinkled it during the night over all the streets of Rome. The citizens were astonished to see such a quantity of earth, fallen, as one might say, from heaven.

However large the sums Signora de' Campireali might spend in the attempt to save her daughter's life, her subterranean passage would doubtless have been discovered, but Pope Gregory XIII happened to die in 1585, and disorder reigned as soon as the See was vacant.

Elena was far from happy at Santa Marta; one may imagine whether common and distinctly poor nuns shewed zeal in annoying a very rich Abbess convicted of such a crime. She was eagerly awaiting the outcome of

her mother's enterprise. But suddenly her heart was caught by strange emotions. Six months had already passed since Fabrizio Colonna, seeing the uncertain state of Gregory XIII's health, and having great plans for the interregnum, had sent one of his officers to Giulio Branciforte, now so widely known in the Spanish armies under the name of Colonel Lizzara. He recalled him to Italy; Giulio was burning to see his native land once more. He landed under a false name at Pescara, a small port on the Adriatic below Chieti, in the Abruzzi, and journeyed over the mountains to la Petrella. The Prince's joy caused general astonishment. He told Giulio that he had sent for him to make him his successor and to give him the command of his troops. To which Branciforte replied that, from the military point of view, it was no longer worth while to continue, as he was easily able to prove; if Spain ever seriously wished to do so, in six months, and at small cost to herself, she could wipe out all the soldiers of fortune in Italy.

"However," young Branciforte added, "if you wish it, Prince, I am ready to take the field. You will always find in me a successor to the gallant Ramicelo, who was killed at the Ciampi."

Before Giulio's arrival, the Prince had ordered, as he alone could order, that no one at la Petrella should dare to speak of Castro or of the Abbess's trial; the penalty of death, without hope of respite, was held out as a deterrent from any rash word. In the course of the affectionate greetings with which he welcomed Branciforte, he asked him on no account to go to Albano without himself, and his method of carrying out the expedition was to occupy the town with a thousand of his men, and to post an advance guard of twelve hundred on the road to Rome. One may imagine poor Giulio's state when the Prince, having sent for old Scotti, who was still alive, to the house in which he had established his headquarters, made him come up to the room in which he himself was sitting with Branciforte. As soon as the two old friends had flung themselves into each other's arms:

"Now, my poor Colonel," he said to Giulio, "be prepared for the worst."

Whereupon he snuffed the candle and left the room, turning the key on the friends.

Next day Giulio, who preferred not to leave his room, sent to the Prince to ask leave to return to la Petrella, and not to see him for some days. But his messenger returned to say that the Prince had disappeared, with all his troops. During the night, he had heard of the death of Gregory XIII; he had forgotten his friend Giulio and was scouring the country. There remained with Giulio only some thirty men belonging to Ranuccio's old company. The reader is aware that in those days, during a vacancy of the See, the law no longer ran, everyone thought of gratifying his own passions, and there was no force but brute force; that is why, before the end of the day, Prince Colonna had already hanged more than fifty of his enemies.

As for Giulio, albeit he had not forty men with him, he made bold to march upon Rome.

All the servants of the Abbess of Castro had remained faithful to her; they were lodged in humble houses near the Convent of Santa Marta. The death agony of Gregory XIII had lasted for more than a week; Signora de' Campireali was eagerly awaiting the troubled days that would follow his death before attacking the final fifty yards of her tunnel. As it had to pass through the cellars of several inhabited houses, she was greatly afraid lest she might be unable to keep from public knowledge the completion of her undertaking.

On the second day after Branciforte's arrival at la Petrella, the three of Giulio's old bravi, whom Elena had taken into her service, appeared to have gone mad. Although everyone knew only too well that she was in the strictest isolation, and guarded by nuns who hated her, Ugone, one of the bravi, came to the gate of the Convent and made the strangest request that he should be allowed to see his mistress, and without delay. He was refused admission and turned from the door. In his desperation, the man remained outside, and began to distribute baiocchi (copper coins) among all the persons employed in the service of the Convent who passed in or out, saying to them these precise words: "Rejoice tenth me; Signor Giulio Branciforte has arrived, he is alive: tell this to your friends."

Ugone's two companions spent the day in bringing him fresh supplies of baiocchi, which they continued to distribute day and night, always repeating the same words, until there was not one baiocco left. But the three bravi,

taking turns, continued none the less to keep guard at the gate of the Convent of Santa Marta, still addressing to all that passed them the same words, followed by an obsequious salute: “Signor Giulio has arrived,” etc. These worthy fellows’ plan was successful: less than thirty-six hours after the giving of the first baiocco, poor Elena, down in her cell, in solitary confinement, knew that Giulio was alive; the words threw her into a sort of frenzy:

“Oh, my mother!” she cried, “what harm you have wrought me!”

A few hours later, the astonishing news was confirmed by little Marietta, who, by making a sacrifice of all her golden ornaments, obtained leave to accompany the sister who took the prisoner her meals. With tears of joy Elena flung herself into her arms.

“This is very pleasant,” she said to her, “but I shall not be with you much longer.”

“Indeed no!” said Marietta. “I am sure that before this Conclave is ended, your imprisonment will be changed to an ordinary banishment.”

“Ah, my dear, to see Giulio again! And to see him, with this guilt on my head!”

In the middle of the third night after this conversation, part of the floor of the church fell in with a loud noise; the nuns of Santa Marta thought that their convent was going to collapse. Their commotion was extreme, everyone was calling out that there had been an earthquake. About an hour after the subsidence of the marble pavement of the church, Signora de”Campireali, preceded by the three bravi in Elena’s service, made her way into the dungeon by the underground passage.

“Victory, victory, Signora!” cried the bravi.

Elena was in a mortal fear; she thought that Giulio Branciforte was with them. She was quite reassured, and her features resumed their stern expression when the men told her that they were escorting Signora de’ Campireali, and that Giulio was still at Albano, which he had just invaded with several thousand troops.

She waited for some moments, and then Signora de' Campireali appeared; she was walking with great difficulty, on the arm of her scudiere, who was in full costume, with sword on hip; but his gorgeous coat was all soiled with earth.

"Oh, my dear Elena, I have come to rescue you!" cried Signora de' Campireali.

"And how do you know that I wish to be rescued?"

Signora de' Campireali was left speechless; she stared helplessly at her daughter; she seemed greatly agitated.

"Well, my dear Elena," she said at length, "fate compels me to confess to you an action which was perhaps natural enough, after the misfortunes that had befallen our family, but of which I repent, and beg that you will forgive me for it: Giulio . . . Branciforte . . . is alive . . ."

"And it is because he is alive that I have no wish to live."

Signora de' Campireali did not at first grasp her daughter's meaning, then she besought her with the most tender supplications; but she could obtain no answer. Elena had turned to her crucifix and was praying without listening to her. In vain, for a whole hour, did Signora de' Campireali make every effort to win from her a word or a look. At length, her daughter, losing patience, said to her:

"It was beneath the marble of this crucifix that his letters were hidden, in my little room at Albano; it had been better to let my father stab me! Go, and leave some gold with me."

As Signora de' Campireali tried to continue speaking to her daughter, disregarding the signs of alarm shewn by her scudiere, Elena lost patience.

"Let me, at least, have an hour of freedom; you have poisoned my life, you wish to poison my death as well."

"We shall still have command of the passage for two or three hours; I venture to hope that you will change your mind!" exclaimed Signora de'

Campireali, bursting into tears.

And she made her way out by the underground passage.

“Ugone, stay with me,” said Elena to one of her bravi, “and see you are well armed, my lad, for you may have to defend me. Let me see your dirk, your sword, your dagger.”

The old soldier shewed her these weapons, all in good condition.

“Good; now wait there, outside my cell; I am going to write Giulio a long letter which you will hand to him yourself; I do not wish it to pass through any hands but yours, having nothing with which to seal it. You may read the whole of the letter. Put in your pockets all the gold my mother has left there, I need for myself only fifty sequins; place them on my bed.”

Having said these words, Elena sat down to write.

“I have not the least doubt of you, my dear Giulio; if I take my departure, it is because I should die of grief in your arms, at the sight of what would have been my happiness, had I not committed a sin. You are not to imagine that I have ever loved any creature in the world after you; far from it, my heart was filled with the bitterest contempt for the man whom I admitted to my room. My sin was solely one of distraction, and, if you like, of wantonness. Think that my spirit, greatly weakened after the futile attempt which I made at la Petrella, where the Prince whom I revered, because you loved him, received me so cruelly; think, I say, that my spirit, greatly weakened, had been assailed by twelve years of falsehood. Everything round me was lying and false, and I knew it. I received first of all some thirty letters from you; imagine the rapture with which, at first, I used to tear them open. But, as I read them, my heart froze. I examined the writing, I recognised your hand, but not your heart. Think that this first falsehood cankered the essence of my life, so that I could open a letter in your writing without any pleasure! The detestable announcement of your death finally killed in me anything that might yet survive from the happy days of our youth. My first intention, as you can well understand, was to go to see with my eyes and touch with my hands the Mexican shore upon which they said that the savages had massacred you; had I carried out that idea . . . we should be happy new, for,

in Madrid, whatever the number and craftiness of the spies that a watchful hand might have managed to dispose round about me, as I myself would have appealed to every heart in which there remained a trace of pity and of goodness, it is probable that I should have arrived at the truth; for already, my Giulio, your gallant deeds had attracted the attention of the whole world towards you, and perhaps someone in Madrid knew that you were Branciforte. Would you like me to tell you what prevented our happiness? First of all, the memory of the atrocious, humiliating reception the Prince gave me at la Petrella; what a chain of obstacles to surmount between Castro and Mexico! You see, my heart had already lost its motive power. Then I had an impulse of vanity. I had erected huge buildings in the Convent, in order to be able to take as my own room the portress's lodge, in which you took shelter on the night of the assault. One day, I was looking at the ground which, for my sake, you had watered with your blood; I heard a contemptuous utterance, raised my head, saw spiteful faces; to avenge myself, I decided to become Abbess. My mother, who knew quite well that you were alive, made heroic efforts to secure that preposterous nomination. The position was nothing, for me, but a source of trouble; it completed the debasement of my nature; I took pleasure often in proving my power by the suffering of others; I committed acts of injustice. I saw myself, at the age of thirty, virtuous according to the world, rich, respected, and yet completely wretched. Then there appeared that poor man, who was goodness itself, but foolishness personified. The effect of his foolishness was that I bore with his first suggestions. My heart had been made so wretched by everything that surrounded me after your departure, that it had no longer the strength to resist the slightest temptation. Shall I confess to you something really indelicate? Yes, for I remember that everything is permitted to the dead. When you read these lines, the worms will be devouring this so-called beauty, which should have been all yours. Well, I must out with this matter which distresses me; I did not see why I should not make trial of the coarser side of love, like all our Roman ladies; I had a lascivious thought, but I was never able to give myself to that man without a feeling of horror and disgust which destroyed all the pleasure. I saw you always at my side, in the garden of our palazzo at Albano, when the Madonna inspired in you that thought, apparently so noble, but one that has, after my mother, been the bane of our lives. You were not at all threatening, but tender and good as you always were, you looked at me, then I felt moments of anger with that other man, and went so far as to beat him with all my strength. This is the whole truth,

my dear Giulio: I did not wish to die without telling you it, and I thought also that perhaps this conversation with you might take away from me the idea of dying. It makes me see all the more clearly what would have been my joy on greeting you again, had I kept myself worthy of you. I order you to live and to continue that military career which caused me so much joy when I heard of your success. What would my joy have been, great God, had I received your letters, especially after the battle of Achenne! Live, and recall often to your mind the memory of Ranuccio, killed at the Ciampi, and that of Elena, who, not to read a reproach in your eyes, lies dead at Santa Marta."

Having written this, Elena went up to the old soldier, whom she found sleeping; she took his dirk from him, without his noticing the loss, then aroused him.

"I have finished," she told him; "I am afraid of our enemies' seizing the passage. Go at once, take my letter which is on the table, and give it yourself to Giulio, yourself, do you understand? In addition to that, give him this handkerchief, tell him that I love him no more at this moment than I have always loved him, always, remember!"

Ugone was on his feet but made no move.

"Off with you!"

"Signora, have you really decided? Signor Giulio loves you so!"

"And I too, I love him, take the letter and give it to him yourself."

"Very well, may God bless you as you deserve!"

Ugone went and speedily returned; he found Elena dead; the dirk was in her heart.

THE CENCI

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

The Don Juan of Molière is, unquestionably, a rake, but first and foremost he is a man of the world; before giving way to the irresistible inclination that attracts him to pretty women, he feels that he must conform to a certain ideal standard, he seeks to be the type of man that would be most admired at the court of a young king of gallantry and parts.

The Don Juan of Mozart is already more true to nature, and less French, he thinks less of what other people will say; his first care is not for appearances, is not parestre, to quote d'Aubigné's Baron de Foeneste. We have but two portraits of the Italian Don Juan, as he must have appeared, in that fair land, in the sixteenth century, in the dawn of the new civilisation.

Of these two portraits, there is one which I simply cannot display, our generation is too straitlaced; one has to remind oneself of that great expression which I used often to hear Lord Byron repeat: "This age of cant." This tiresome form of hypocrisy, which takes in no one, has the great advantage of giving fools something to say: they express their horror that people have ventured to mention this, or to laugh at that, etc. Its disadvantage is that it vastly restricts the field of history.

If the reader has the good taste to allow me, I intend to offer him, in all humility, an historical notice of the second of thes'e Don Juans, of whom it is possible to speak in 1837; his name was Francesco Cenci.

To render a Don Juan possible, there must be hypocrisy in society. A Don Juan would have been an effect without a cause in the ancient world;

religion was a matter for rejoicing, it urged men to take their pleasure; how could it have punished people who make a certain pleasure their whole business in life? The government alone spoke of abstinence, it forbade things that might harm the state, that is to say the common interest of all, and not what might harm the individual actor.

And so any man with a taste for women and plenty of money could be a Don Juan in Athens; no one would have made any objection; no one professed that this life is a vale of tears and that there is merit in inflicting suffering on oneself.

I do not think that the Athenian Don Juan could arrive at the criminal stage as rapidly as the Don Juan of a modern monarchy; a great part of the latter's pleasure consists in challenging public opinion, and he has made a start, in his youth, by imagining that he was only challenging hypocrisy.

To break the laws under a monarchy like that of Louis XV, to fire a shot at a slater and bring him crashing down from his roof, does not that prove that one moves in royal circles, has the best possible tone, and laughs at one's judge, who is a bourgeois? To laugh at the judge, is not that the first exploit of every little incipient Don Juan?

With us, women are no longer in fashion, that is why the Don Juan type is rare; but when it existed, such men invariably began by seeking quite natural pleasures, boasting the while of their courage in challenging ideas which seemed to them not to be founded on reason in the religion of their contemporaries. It is only later on, and when he is beginning to become perverted that your Don Juan finds an exquisite pleasure in challenging opinions which he himself feels to be just and rational.

This transition must have been difficult and rare in an-[lee] cient times, and it is only when we come to the Roman Emperors, after Tiberius and Capri, that we find libertines who love corruption for its own sake, that is to say for the pleasure of challenging the rational opinions of their contemporaries.

Thus it is to the Christian religion that I ascribe the possibility of the Satanic part played by Don Juan. It was this religion, doubtless, which taught the world that a poor slave, a gladiator had a soul absolutely equal in capacity to

that of Cassar himself; we have, therefore, to thank it for having produced a delicacy of feeling. Not that I have any doubt that sooner or later such feelings would have grown up spontaneously in the human breast. The Aeneid is considerably more tender than the Iliad.

The theory held by Jesus was that of the Arab philosophers of His day; the only new thing introduced into the world as a result of the principles preached by Saint Paul is a body of priests absolutely set apart from their fellow citizens and having, indeed, diametrically opposite interests to theirs. [Footnote: See Montesquieu, Politique des Romains dans la religion.]

This body made it its sole business to cultivate and strengthen the religious sense; it invented privileges and habits to stir the hearts of all classes, from the uncultured shepherd to the jaded courtier; it contrived to stamp the memory of itself on the charming impressions of early childhood; it never allowed the slightest pestilence or general calamity to pass without profiting by it to intensify the dread and sense of religion, or at any rate to build a fine church, like the Salute at Venice.

The existence of this body produced that admirable spectacle: Pope Saint Leo resisting without physical force the savage Attila and his hordes of barbarians who had just overrun China, Persia and the Gauls.

And so, religion, like that absolute power tempered by popular songs, which we call the French Monarchy, has produced certain singular things which the world might never, perhaps, have seen had it bean deprived of those two institutions.

Among these several things, good or bad but all alike singular and curious, which would indeed have astonished Aristotle, Polybius, Augustus, and the other wise heads of antiquity, I have no hesitation in including the wholly modern character of Don Juan. He is, to my mind, a product of the ascetic institutions of the Popes that came after Luther; for Leo X and his court (1506) followed more or less closely the religious principles of the Athenians.

Molière's Don Juan was performed early in the reign of Louis XIV, on the 15th of February, 1665; that monarch was not as yet devout, nevertheless the

ecclesiastical censure ordered the scene of the beggar in the forest to be omitted. These censors, to strengthen their positon, tried to persuade the young king, so prodigiously ignorant, that the word Jansenist was synonymous with Republican. [Footnote: Saint–Simon, Mémoires de l'abbé Blache.]

The original is by a Spaniard, Tirso de Molina; [Footnote: This was the name adopted by a monk, a man of parts, Fray Gabriel Tellez. He belonged to the Order of Mercy, and we have several plays by him in which there are inspired passages, among others El Timido a la Corte. Tellez was the author of three hundred comedies, some seventy or eighty of which still survive. He died about 1610.] an Italian company played an imitation of it in Paris about the year 1664, and created a furore. It has probably been acted more often than any other comedy in the world. This is because it contains the devil and love, the fear of hell and an exalted passion for a woman, that is to say the most terrible and the most attractive things that exist in the eyes of all men who have to any degree risen above the level of savagery.

It is not surprising that the portrait of Don Juan was introduced into literature by a Spanish poet. Love fills a large place in the life of that nation; it is a serious passion there, and one that compels the sacrifice of every other passion to itself, including that, incredible as it may seem, of vanity! It is the same in Germany and in Italy. Properly speaking, France is the only country completely free from this passion, which makes these foreigners commit so many acts of folly: such as marrying a penniless girl, making the excuse that she is pretty and you are in love with her. Girls who lack beauty do not lack admirers in France; we are a cautious people. Otherwise they are reduced to entering religion, and that is why convents are indispensable in Spain. Girls have no dowry in that country, and this rule has maintained the triumph of love. In France has not love fled to the attics, taken refuge, that is, among the girls who do not marry by the intervention of the family lawyer?

Nothing need be said of the Don Juan of Lord Byron, he is merely a Faublas, a good looking but insignificant young man, upon whom all sorts of improbable good fortune are heaped.

So it is in Italy alone, and there only in the sixteenth century that this singular character could make his first appearance. It was in Italy and in the

seventeenth century that a Princess said, as she sipped an ice with keen enjoyment on the evening of a hot day: “What a pity, this is not a sin!”

This sentiment forms, in my opinion, the foundation of the character of a Don Juan, and, as we see, the Christian religion is necessary to it.

As to which a Neapolitan writer exclaims: “Is it nothing to defy heaven, and to believe that at that very instant heaven may consume one to ashes? Hence, it is said, the intense pleasure of having a nun for one’s mistress, and a nun full of piety, who knows quite well that she is doing wrong, and asks pardon of God with passion, as she sins with passion.” [Footnote: Don Domenico Paglietta.]

Let us take the case of a Christian extremely perverse, born in Rome at the moment when the stern Pius V had just restored to favour or invented a mass of trifling practices absolutely alien to that simple morality which gives the name of virtue only to what is of use to mankind. An inexorable Inquisition, so inexorable indeed that it lasted but a short time in Italy, and was obliged to take refuge in Spain, had been given fresh powers, [Footnote: Saint Pius V (Ghislieri), a Piedmontese, whose thin, stern face is to be seen on the tomb of Sixtus V in Santa Maria Maggiore, was Grand Inquisitor when he was called to the throne of Saint Peter, in 1586. He governed the Church for six years and twenty-four days. The reader should refer to his letters, edited by M. de Potter, the only man of our time with any knowledge of this detail of history. The work of M. de Potter, an inexhaustible mine of facts, is the fruit of fourteen years of conscientious research in the libraries of Florence, Venice and Rome.] and was inspiring terror in all. For some years, the severest penalties were attached to the non-observance or public disparagement of these minute little practices, raised to the rank of the most sacred duties of religion; the perverse Roman of whom we have spoken would have shrugged his shoulders when he saw the whole of his fellow citizens trembling before the terrible laws of the Inquisition.

“Very good!” we can imagine him saying to himself, “I am the richest man in Rome, this capital of the world; I am going to be the most courageous man also; I shall publicly deride everything that these people respect, and that bears so little resemblance to what people ought to respect.”

For a Don Juan, to be true to his type, must be a man of feeling, and be endowed with that quick and keen mind which gives one a clear insight into the motives of human actions.

Francesco Cenci must have said to himself: “By what speaking actions can I, a Roman, born in Rome in the year 1527, during those six months in which the Lutheran troops of the Connétable de Bourbon were committing the most appalling profanations in the holy places; by what actions can I call attention to my own courage and give myself, as fully as possible, the pleasure of defying public opinion? How am I to astonish my foolish contemporaries? How can I give myself that keenest of pleasures, of feeling myself to be different from all that vulgar rabble?”

It could never have entered the head of a Roman, and of a Roman of those days to stop short at words. There is no country in which brave words are more despised than Italy.

The man who might have conversed thus with himself was called Francesco Cenci: he was killed before the eyes of his wife and daughter on the 15th of September, 1598. No pleasant memories remain to us of this Don Juan, his character was in no way softened and modified, like that of Molière’s Don Juan, by the idea of being, first and foremost, a man of the world. He paid no heed to the rest of mankind except by shewing his superiority to them, making use of them in carrying out his plans, or hating them. For your Don Juan finds no pleasure in sympathy, in sweet musings or in the illusions of a tender heart. He requires, above all, pleasures which shall be triumphs, which can be seen by others, and cannot be denied; he requires the list flaunted by the insolent Leporello before the sorrowful eyes of Elvira.

The Roman Don Juan took good care to avoid the signal folly of giving the key to his character and confiding his secrets to a lackey, like the Don Juan of Molière; he lived without a confidant, and uttered no words save those that would be useful in the advancement of his projects. No one ever surprised him in one of those moments of true tenderness and charming gaiety which make us forgive the Don Juan of Mozart; in short, the portrait which I am about to reproduce is appalling.

Had I been free to choose, I should not have written of this character, I should have confined myself to studying it, for it is more horrible than strange; but I must explain that it was demanded of me by travelling companions to whom I could refuse nothing. In 1823 I had the pleasure of visiting Italy with certain charming people, whom I shall never forget; like them, I was captivated by the portrait of Beatrice Cenci which is to be seen in Rome, at the palazzo Barberini.

The gallery of that palazzo is now reduced to seven or eight pictures; but of these four are masterpieces: there is first of all the portrait of the famous Fornarina, Raphael's mistress, by Raphael himself. This portrait, of the authenticity of which no doubt can be entertained, for we find copies of it made at the time, differs entirely from the figure which, in the gallery at Florence, is described as that of Raphael's mistress, and has been engraved, with that title, by Morghen. The Florence portrait is not even by Raphael. In deference to that great name, will the reader kindly pardon this little digression?

The second priceless portrait in the Barberini gallery is by Guido; it is the portrait of Beatrice Cenci, of which one sees so many bad engravings. That great painter has placed a meaningless piece of drapery over Beatrice's throat: he has crowned her with a turban; he would have been afraid of carrying accuracy to the pitch of horror had he reproduced exactly the toilet that she made before appearing at the place of execution, and the dishevelled hair of a poor girl of sixteen, abandoned to the wildest despair. The face has sweetness and beauty, the expression is most appealing and the eyes very large: they have the startled air of a person who has just been caught in the act of shedding large tears. The hair is golden and of great beauty. This head has nothing of the Roman pride and consciousness of its own strength which one often detects in the assured glance of a daughter of the Tiber, una figlia del Tevere, as they say of themselves with pride. Unfortunately the flesh tints of this portrait have turned to brick red during the long interval of two hundred and thirty-eight years which separates us from the catastrophe of which you are about to read.

The third portrait in the Barberini gallery is that of Lucrezia Petroni, Beatrice's stepmother, who was executed with her. She is the type of the Roman matron in her natural beauty and pride. [Footnote: This pride is not

in the least dependent on social rank, as in portraits by Vandyck.] The features are large and the flesh of a dazzling whiteness, the eyebrows are black and strongly marked, the gaze commanding and at the same time sensuous. She makes a fine contrast with so sweet, so simple a face, almost a German face, as that of her stepdaughter.

The fourth portrait, rendered striking by the accuracy and brightness of its colouring, is one of the masterpieces of Titian; it is that of a Greek slave who was the mistress of the famous Doge Barbarigo.

Almost invariably, foreigners coming to Rome ask to be taken, at the outset of their tour of inspection, to the Barberini gallery; they are attracted, the women especially, by the portraits of Beatrice Cenci and her stepmother. I had my share of the general curiosity; then, like everyone else, I sought to obtain access to the reports of the famous trial. If you are similarly privileged, you will be quite surprised, I expect, as you peruse these documents, which are all in Latin except the replies made by the accused persons, to find almost no indication of the facts of the case. The reason is that in Rome, in 1599, there was no one who was not acquainted with the facts. I purchased the right to transcribe a contemporary account; I felt that it would be possible to give a translation of it without shocking any sensibility; anyhow this translation could be read aloud before ladies in 1823. It must be understood that the translator ceases to be faithful to his original when he can no longer be so: otherwise the sense of horror would soon outweigh that of curiosity.

The tragic part played by a Don Juan (one who seeks to conform to no ideal standard, and considers public opinion only with a view to outraging it) is here set forth in all its horror. The enormity of his crimes forces two unhappy women to have him killed before their eyes; of these two women one was his wife and the other his daughter, and the reader will not dare to make up his mind as to whether they were guilty. Their contemporaries were of the opinion that they ought not to have been put to death.

I am convinced that the tragedy of Galeotto Manfredi (who was killed by his wife: the subject is treated by the great poet Monti) and ever so many other domestic tragedies of the cinquecento, which are less well known, and barely mentioned in the local histories of Italian cities, ended in a scene

similar to that in the castle of Petrella. What follows is my translation of the contemporary account; it is in the Italian of Rome, and was written on the 14th of September, 1599.

A True Narrative

Of the deaths of Giacomo and Beatrice Cenci, and of Lucrezia Petroni Cenci, their stepmother, executed for the crime of parricide, on Saturday last, the llth of September, 1599, in the reign of our Holy Father the Pope, Clement VIII, Aldobrandini.

The execrable life consistently led by Francesco Cenci, a native of Rome and one of the wealthiest of our fellow citizens, has ended by leading him to disaster. He has brought to a precocious death his sons, stout hearted young fellows, and his daughter Beatrice, who, although she mounted the scaffold when barely sixteen years old (four days since), was reckoned nevertheless one of the chief beauties of the States of the Church, if not the whole of Italy. The rumour has gone abroad that Signor Guido Reni, one of the pupils of that admirable school of Bologna, was pleased to paint the portrait of poor Beatrice, last Friday, that is to say on the day preceding her execution. If this great painter has performed this task as he has done in the case of the other paintings which he has executed in this capital, posterity will be able to form some idea of the beauty of this lovely girl. In order that it may also preserve some record of her unprecedented misfortunes, and of the astounding force with which this truly Roman nature was able to fight against them, I have decided to write down what I have learned as to the action which brought her to her death, and what I saw on the day of her glorious tragedy.

The people who have supplied me with my information were in a position which made them acquainted with the roost secret details, such as are unknown in Rome even today, although for the last six weeks people have been speaking of nothing but the Cenci trial. I shall write with a certain freedom, knowing as I do that I shall be able to deposit my commentary in respectable archives from which it will certainly not be released until after

my day. My one regret is that I must pronounce, but truth will have it so, against the innocence of this poor Beatrice Cenci, as greatly adored and respected by all that knew her as her horrible father was hated and execrated.

This man who, indisputably, had received from heaven the most astounding sagacity and eccentricity, was the son of Monsignor Cenci, who, under Pius V, had risen to the post of Tesoriere, or Minister of Finance. That saintly Pope, entirely taken up, as we know, with his righteous hatred of heresy and the re-establishment of his admirable Inquisition, felt only contempt for the temporal administration of his State, so that this Monsignor Cenci, who was Treasurer for some years before 1572, found himself able to leave to this terrible man who was his son and the father of Beatrice Cenci a clear income of one hundred and sixty thousand piastres (about two and a half millions of our francs in 1837).

Francesco Cenci, apart from this great fortune, had a reputation for courage and prudence to which, in his youth, no other Roman could lay claim; and this reputation established him all the more firmly at the Papal court and among the people as a whole, inasmuch as the criminal actions which were beginning to be imputed to him were all of the kind which the world is most ready to forgive. Many citizens of Rome still recalled, with a bitter regret, the freedom of thought and action which they had enjoyed in the days of Leo X, who was taken from us in 1513, and under Paul III, who died in 1549. Already, in the reign of the latter of these Popes, people were beginning to speak of young Francesco Cenci on account of certain singular love affairs, carried to a successful issue by means more singular still.

Under Paul III, at a time when one could still speak with a certain degree of freedom, many people said that Francesco delighted most of all in strange incidents such as might give him peripezie di nuova idea, novel and disturbing sensations; those who take this view find support in the discovery, among his account books, of such entries as the following:

“For the adventures and peripezie of Toscanella, three thousand five hundred piastres” (about sixty thousand francs in 1837) “e non fu caro” (and not dear at that).

It is not known, perhaps, in the other cities of Italy, that our destinies and our mode of conduct in Rome vary with the character of the reigning Pope. Thus, for thirteen years, under the good Pope Gregory XIII (Buoncompagni), everything was permitted in Rome; if you wished, you had your enemy stabbed, and were never punished, provided that you behaved in a modest fashion. This excessive indulgence was followed by an excessive severity during the five years of the reign of the great Sixtus V, of whom it has been said, as of the Emperor Augustus, that he should either never have occurred or have remained for ever. Then one saw wretched creatures executed for murders or poisonings which had been forgotten for ten years, but which they had been so unfortunate as to confess to Cardinal Montalto, afterwards Sixtus V.

It was chiefly under Gregory XIII that people began to speak regularly of Francesco Cenci; he had married a wife of great wealth and such as befitted a gentleman of his high standing; she died after bearing him seven children. Shortly after her death, he took as his second wife Lucrezia Petroni, a woman of rare beauty, and distinguished especially for the dazzling whiteness of her skin, but a little too plump, a common fault among our Roman women. By Lucrezia he had no children.

The least fault to be found with Francesco Cenci was his propensity towards an infamous form of love; the greatest was that of unbelief in God. Never in his life was he seen to enter a church.

Three times imprisoned for his infamous love affairs, he secured his freedom by giving two hundred thousand piastres to the persons most in favour with the twelve successive Popes under whom he lived. (Two hundred thousand piastres amount to about five millions in 1837.)

When I first set eyes on Francesco Cenci his hair was already grey, during the reign of Pope Buoncompagni, when every licence was allowed to such as dared take it. He was a man of about five feet four inches, and very well built, though a trifle thin; he was reputed to be extremely strong, possibly he spread this rumour himself; he had large and expressive eyes, but the upper lids were too much inclined to droop; his nose was too large and prominent, his lips thin, and parted in a charming smile. This smile became terrible when he fastened his gaze on one of his enemies; if anything moved or

annoyed him, he would begin to tremble in an alarming fashion. I have known him when I was young, in the days of Pope Buoncompagni, go on horseback from Rome to Naples, doubtless upon some amorous errand; he would pass through the forests of San Germano and la Faggiola, regardless of brigands, and would complete the journey, it was said, in less than twenty hours. He travelled always by himself, and without informing anyone; when his first horse was worn out, he would buy or steal another. Should any objection be offered by the owner, he had no objection, himself, to using his dagger. But it is true to say that in the days of my youth, that is to say when he was about forty-eight or fifty, there was no one bold enough to withstand him. His great pleasure was to defy his enemies.

He was very well known on all the roads in the States of His Holiness; he paid generously, but he was capable also, two or three months after an injury had been done him, of sending one of his sicarj to dispatch the person who had offended him.

The one virtuous action which he performed in the whole of his long life was to build, in the courtyard of his vast palazzo by the Tiber, a church dedicated to Saint Thomas; and even to this good deed he was prompted by the curious desire to be able to look down [Footnote: In Rome people are buried beneath the floors of churches,] upon the graves of all his children, whom he hated with an extravagant and unnatural loathing, even in their earliest infancy, when they were incapable of offending him in any way.

“That is where I wish to put them all,” he would often say with a bitter laugh to the masons whom he employed to build his church. He sent the three eldest, Giacomo, Cristoforo and Rocco, to study at the University of Salamanca in Spain. Once they were in that distant land he took an evil delight in never sending them any money, so that these unfortunate youths, after addressing a number of letters to their father, who made no reply, were reduced to the miserable necessity, for their return journey, of borrowing small sums of money or begging their way along the roads.

In Rome, they found a father more severe and rigid, more harsh than ever, who, for all his immense wealth, would neither clothe them nor give them the money necessary to purchase the cheapest forms of food. They were obliged to have recourse to the Pope, who forced Francesco Cenci to make

them a small allowance. With this very modest provision they parted from their father.

Shortly afterwards, on account of some scandalous love affair, Francesco was put in prison for the third and last time; whereupon the three brothers begged an audience of our Holy Father the Pope now reigning, and jointly besought him to put to death Francesco Cenci their father, who, they said, was dishonouring their house. Clement VIII had a great mind to do so, but decided not to follow his first impulse, so as not to give satisfaction to these unnatural children, and expelled them ignominiously from his presence.

The father, as we have already said, came out of prison after paying a large sum of money to a powerful protector. It may be imagined that the strange action of his three elder sons was bound to increase still further the hatred that he felt for his children. He continually rained curses on them all, old and young, and every day would take a stick to his two poor daughters, who lived with him in his palazzo.

The eldest daughter, although closely watched, by dint of endless efforts managed to present a petition to the Pope; she implored His Holiness to give her in marriage or to place her in a convent. Clement VIII took pity on her distress, and married her to Carlo Gabrielli, of the noblest family of Gubbio; His Holiness obliged her father to give her an ample dowry.

Struck by this unexpected blow, Francesco Cenci shewed an intense rage, and to prevent Beatrice, when she grew older, from taking it into her head to follow her sister’s example, confined her in one of the apartments of his huge palazzo. There, no one was allowed to set eyes on Beatrice, at that time barely fourteen years old, and already in the full splendour of her enchanting beauty. She had, above all, a gaiety, a candour and a comic spirit which I have never seen in anyone but her. Francesco Cenci carried her food to her himself. We may suppose that it was then that the monster fell in love with her, or pretended to fall in love, in order to torment his wretched daughter. He often spoke to her of the perfidious trick which her elder sister had played on him, and flying into a rage at the sound of his own voice, would end by showering blows on Beatrice.

While this was happening, Rocco Cenci, his son, was killed by a pork-butcher, and, in the following year, Cristoforo Cenci was killed by Paolo Corso of Massa. On this occasion, he displayed his black impiety, for at the funerals of his two sons he refused to spend so much as a single baiocco on candles. On learning of the death of his son Cristoforo, he exclaimed that he could never be truly happy until all his children were buried, and that, when the last of them died, he would, as a sign of joy, set fire to his palazzo. Rome was astounded at this utterance, but considered that everything was possible with such a man, who gloried in defying the whole world, including the Pope himself.

(Here it becomes quite impossible to follow the Roman narrator in his extremely obscure account of the strange actions by which Francesco Cenci sought to astonish his contemporaries. His wife and his unfortunate daughter were, to all appearance, made the victims of his abominable ideas.)

All this was not enough for him; he attempted with threats, and with the use of force, to outrage his own daughter Beatrice, who was already fully grown and beautiful; he was not ashamed to go and lie down in her bed, being himself completely naked. He walked about with her in the rooms of his palazzo, still stark naked; then he took her into his wife's bed, in order that, by the light of the lamps, poor Lucrezia might see what he was doing to Beatrice.

He taught the poor girl a frightful heresy, which I scarcely dare repeat, to wit that, when a father has carnal knowledge of his own daughter, the children born of the union are of necessity saints, and that all the greatest saints whom the Church venerates were born in this manner, that is to say, that their maternal grandfather was also their father.

When Beatrice resisted his execrable intentions, he belaboured her with the cruellest blows, until the wretched girl, unable to endure so miserable an existence, decided to follow the example that her sister had given her. She addressed to our Holy Father the Pope a petition set forth in great detail; but there is reason to believe that Francesco Cenci had taken due precautions, for it does not appear that this petition ever came into the hands of His Holiness; at least, it could not be found in the secretariat of the Memoriali, when, after Beatrice's imprisonment, her counsel was in urgent need of the

document; it would to some extent have furnished proof of the appalling excesses committed in the castle of la Petrella. Would it not have been evident to all that Beatrice Cenci had found herself legally entitled to protection? This memorial was written also in the name of Lucrezia, Beatrice's stepmother.

Francesco Cenci learned of this attempt, and one may guess with what fury he intensified his maltreatment of these two wretched women.

Life became absolutely intolerable to them, and it was at this point that, seeing that they had nothing to expect from the justice of the Sovereign, whose courtiers were seduced by Francesco's lavish gifts, they conceived the idea of adopting those extreme measures which ended in their ruin, but had nevertheless the advantage of ending their sufferings in this world.

It should be explained that the famous Monsignor Guerra was a frequent visitor to the palazzo Cenci; he was a man of tall stature and extremely handsome to boot, and had received this special gift from fortune that, to whatever task he might apply himself, he performed it with a grace that was quite peculiarly his own. It has been supposed that he was in love with Beatrice and had thoughts of discarding the ciantellata and marrying her; [Footnote: The majority of the monsignori are not in holy orders, and are free to marry.] but, albeit he took the utmost care to conceal his feelings, he was execrated by Francesco Cenci, who accused him of having been the intimate friend of all his children. When Mon-signor Guerra knew that Signor Cenci was not in his palazzo, he went up to the ladies' rooms, and spent several hours in conversing with them and listening to their complaints of the incredible treatment to which they were both subjected. It appears that Beatrice was the first to speak openly to Monsignor Guerra of the plan upon which they had decided. After a time, he promised them his support; and finally, after strong and repeated pressure from Beatrice, consented to convey their strange design to Giacomo Cenci, without whose consent nothing could be done, since he was the eldest brother, and head of the family after Francesco.

Nothing was easier than to draw him into the conspiracy; he was treated extremely ill by his father, who gave him no assistance, a deprivation which Giacomo felt all the more keenly, inasmuch as he was married and had six

children. The conspirators chose as a meeting place, in which to discuss the means of putting Francesco Cenci to death, Monsignor Guerra's apartment. They conducted their business with due formality, and the votes of the stepmother and the girl were taken on all points. When at length a decision had been reached, they chose two of Francesco Cenci's vassals, each of whom had conceived an undying hatred for him. One of these was named Marzio; he was a stout fellow, deeply attached to Francesco's unfortunate children, and, in order to do something that would give them pleasure, he consented to take part in the parricide. Olimpio, the second, had been chosen as warden of the fortress of la Petrella, in the Kingdom of Naples, by Prince Colonna; but, by using his all-powerful influence with the Prince, Francesco Cenci had procured his dismissal.

Everything was arranged with these two men; Francesco Cenci having announced that, in order to escape from the unhealthy air of Rome, he was going to spend the summer in this fortress of la Petrella, it occurred to them that they might collect there a dozen Neapolitan banditi. Olimpio undertook to provide these. It was decided to conceal the men in the forests adjoining la Petrella, to warn them of the hour at which Francesco Cenci was to start on his journey; they would intercept him on the road, and send word to his family that they would release him on payment of a large ransom. Then his children would be obliged to return to Rome to collect the sum demanded by the brigands; they would pretend to be unable to find this sum immediately, and the brigands, carrying out their threat, and seeing no sign of the money, would put Francesco Cenci to death. In this way, no one would be led to suspect the true authors of the crime.

But, when summer came and Francesco Cenci left Rome for la Petrella, the spy who was to give notice that he had started was too late in warning the banditi posted in the woods, and they had not time to come down to the high road. Cenci arrived without interference at la Petrella; the brigands, tired of waiting for an uncertain booty, went off to rob elsewhere on their own account.

For his part, Cenci, grown prudent and cautious with advancing years, never ventured to emerge from his fortress. And, his ill humour increasing with the infirmities of age, which he found insupportable, he intensified the atrocious

treatment which he made the two poor women undergo. He pretended that they were rejoicing in his weakness.

Beatrice, driven to desperation by the horrible things which she had to endure, summoned Marzio and Olimpio beneath the walls of the fortress. During the night, while her father slept, she conversed with them from one of the lower windows and threw down to them letters addressed to Monsignor Guerra. By means of these letters, it was arranged that Monsignor Guerra should promise Marzio and Olimpio a thousand piastres if they would take upon themselves the responsibility for putting Francesco Cenci to death. A third of the sum was to be paid in Rome, before the deed, by Monsignor Guerra, and the other two-thirds by Lucrezia and Beatrice, when, the deed done, they should be in command of Cenci's strong-box.

It was further agreed that the deed should be done on the Nativity of the Virgin, and for this purpose the two men were secretly admitted to the fortress. But Lucrezia was overcome by the respect due to a festival of the Madonna, and she made Beatrice postpone the action until the following day, so as not to be guilty of a twofold crime.

It was therefore on the evening of the 9th of September, 1598, that, mother and daughter having with great dexterity administered opium to Francesco Cenci, that man so hard to deceive, he fell into a deep sleep.

Towards midnight Beatrice herself let into the fortress Marzio and Olimpio; next, Lucrezia and Beatrice led them to the old man's room, where he lay fast asleep. There, they were left by themselves that they might do what had been determined upon, and the women withdrew to wait in an adjoining room. Suddenly they saw the two men appear with pallid faces, and apparently out of their wits.

"What has happened?" cried the ladies.

"It is a shame and a disgrace," the men answered, "to kill a poor old man in his sleep! Pity stayed our hands."

On hearing this excuse, Beatrice grew indignant, and began to abuse them, saying:

“And so you two men, thoroughly prepared to act, have not the courage to kill a man in his sleep! [Footnote: All these details were proved at the trial.] You would be a great deal less willing to look him in the face if he were awake! And so it is for nothing more than this that you dare to ask for money? Very well! Since your cowardice forces me, I will kill my father myself; and as for you, you have not long to live either!”

Animated by these few scathing words, and fearing a reduction of the fee that had been promised them, the assassins boldly returned to the bedroom, followed by the women. One of them had a great nail which he placed vertically over the sleeping man’s eye; the other, who had a hammer, drove the nail into his head. Another large nail was driven similarly into his breast, so that the wretched soul, burdened with all its recent sins, was carried off by devils; the body struggled, but in vain.

The deed accomplished, the girl gave Olimpio a great purse filled with money: she gave Marzio a cloak of broadcloth with a gold stripe, which had belonged to her father, and dismissed them.

The women, left to themselves, began by withdrawing the large nail driven into the head of the corpse, and the other in his throat; then, after wrapping the body in a sheet from the bed, they dragged it through a long series of rooms to a gallery which overlooked a small, deserted garden. From this gallery, they threw down the body upon a great elder tree which grew in that lonely spot. As there was a privy at the end of this little gallery, they hoped that when, in the morning, the old man’s body was found caught in the branches of the elder, it would be supposed that his foot had slipped and that he had fallen while on his way to the privy.

Things fell out exactly as they had foreseen. In the morning, when the body was found, a great clamour arose in the fortress; they did not forget to utter piercing cries, and to bewail the lamentable death of their husband and father. But the young Beatrice had the courage of outraged modesty, not the prudence necessary in this life; early in the morning, she had given to a woman who washed the linen in the fortress a sheet stained with blood, telling her not to be surprised at such a quantity of blood, because she herself, all night long, had been suffering from a copious issue; and in this way, for the moment, all went well.

Francesco Cenci was given a pompous funeral, and the women returned to Rome to enjoy that tranquillity which they had for so long desired in vain. They imagined themselves to be happy now for ever, for they did not know what was happening at Naples.

The justice of heaven, which would not allow so atrocious a parricide to remain unpunished, brought it about that, as soon as the news reached that city of what had occurred in the fortress of la Petrella, the principal judge there felt misgivings, and sent a royal commissioner to examine the body and arrest any suspected persons.

The royal commissioner ordered the arrest of everyone living in the fortress. They were all taken to Naples in chains; and nothing in their depositions appeared suspicious, except that the laundress professed to have received from Beatrice a sheet or sheets stained with blood. She was asked whether Beatrice had attempted to explain these great stains of blood; she replied that Beatrice had spoken of a natural infirmity. She was asked whether stains of such a size could be due to such an infirmity; she replied that they could not, and that the stains on the sheet were of too bright a red.

This information was immediately sent to the judicial authorities in Rome, and yet many months elapsed before it occurred to anyone here to order the arrest of Francesco Cenci's children. Lucrezia, Beatrice and Giacomo could have escaped a thousand times over, either by going to Florence on the pretext of making some pilgrimage, or by taking ship at Civita–Vecchia; but God withheld from them this life-giving inspiration.

Monsignor Guerra, having had word of what was happening in Naples, at once sent out a number of men with orders to kill Marzio and Olimpio; but Olimpio alone did they succeed in killing at Terni. The Neapolitan authorities had arrested Marzio, who was taken to Naples, where he immediately confessed all.

This terrible deposition was at once sent to the authorities in Rome, who at last decided to arrest and confine in the Corte Savella prison Giacomo and Bernardo Cenci, the only surviving sons of Francesco, as also Lucrezia, his widow. Beatrice was guarded in her father's palazzo by a numerous troop of sbirri. Marzio was brought from Naples, and likewise confined in the Savella

prison; there he was confronted with the two women, who denied everything consistently, Beatrice in particular refusing steadfastly to recognise the striped cloak which she had given to Marzio. The brigand, overcome by enthusiasm for the marvellous beauty and astonishing eloquence of the girl as she answered the judge, denied everything that he had confessed in Naples. He was put to the question, he admitted nothing, preferring to die in agony; fit homage to the beauty of Beatrice!

After the death of this man, there being no proof of the crime, the judges found that there was not sufficient reason for putting to the torture either Cenci's two sons or the two women. All four were taken to the Castel Sant' Angelo, where they remained for some months in peace and quietness.

The matter seemed to be at an end, and no one in Rome had any doubt that this girl, of such beauty and courage, who had aroused so keen an interest, would shortly be set at liberty, when, unfortunately, the officers of justice succeeded in arresting the brigand who, at Terni, had killed Olimpio; he was brought to Rome, where he confessed everything.

Monsignor Guerra, whom the brigand's confession so dangerously compromised, was summoned to appear before the court without delay; imprisonment was certain, death probable. But this remarkable man, whom fate had endowed with the art of doing everything well, succeeded in escaping in a manner which seems miraculous. He was reckoned the handsomest man at the Papal court, and was too well known in Rome to have any chance of escape; besides, a close watch was being kept at the gates, and probably, from the moment of his summons, his house had been under supervision. It should be added that he was very tall, witk an extremely fair skin, and a fine beard and hair, fair also.

With inconceivable rapidity, he procured a charcoal seller, took his clothes, had his own head and beard shaved, stained his face, bought a pair of asses, and began to perambulate the streets of Rome selling charcoal, limping as he went. He assumed with admirable skill an air of plebeian stupidity, and went about crying his charcoal with his mouth full of bread and onions, while hundreds of sbirri were searching for him not only in Rome, but on all the roads as well. At length, when his appearance was familiar to most of the sbirri, he ventured to leave Rome, still driving before him his pair of asses

laden with charcoal. He met several troops of sbirri, who had no thought of stopping him. Since then, only one letter has been received from him; his mother has sent money to him at Marseilles, and it is supposed that he is serving in the French war, as a private soldier.

The confession of the Terni assassin and this flight of Monsignor Guerra, which created an enormous sensation in Rome, so revived suspicion, and indeed seemed so to point to the guilt of the Cenci, that they were taken from the Castel Sant' Angelo and brought back to the Savella prison.

The two brothers, put to the torture, were far from imitating the magnanimity of the brigand Marzio; they were so pusillanimous as to confess everything. Signora Lucrezia Petroni was so habituated to the ease and comfort of a life of the greatest luxury, and besides was so stout in figure that she could not endure the question by the cord; she told everything that she knew.

But it was not so with Beatrice Cenci, a girl full of vivacity and courage. Neither the kind words nor the threats of the judge Moscati had any effect on her. She endured the torture of the cord without a moment's faltering and with perfect courage. Never once could the judge induce her to give an answer that compromised her in the slightest degree; indeed, by her quick-witted vivacity, she utterly confounded the famous Olisse Moscati, the judge responsible for examining her. He was so much surprised by the conduct of the girl that he felt it his duty to make a full report to His Holiness Pope Clement VIII, whom God preserve.

His Holiness wished to see the documents and to study the case. He was afraid lest the judge Olisse Moscati, so celebrated for his deep learning and the superior sagacity of his mind, might have been overpowered by Beatrice's beauty, and be helping her out in his examinations of her. The consequence was that His Holiness took the case out of his hands, and entrusted it to another and a more severe judge. Indeed, this barbarian had the heart to subject without pity so lovely a body ad torturam capillorum (that is to say, questions were put to Beatrice Cenci while she was hanging by her hair.) [Footnote: See the treatise de Suppliciis, by the celebrated Farinacci, a jurist of the time. It contains horrible details which our nineteenth century sensibility cannot endure even to read about, but which were very creditably endured by a Roman girl of sixteen abandoned by her

lover.] While she was fastened to the cord, this new judge confronted Beatrice with her stepmother and her brothers. As soon as Giacomo and Donna Lucrezia saw her:

“The sin has been committed,” they cried; “you should perform the penance also, and not let your body be torn to pieces through a futile obstinacy.”

“So you wish to cover our house with shame,” replied the girl, “and to die an ignominious death. You are greatly mistaken; but, since you wish it, so be it.”

And, turning to the sbirri:

“Release me,” she said to them, “and let someone read over to me my mother’s examination. I will admit what must be admitted, and deny what must be denied.”

This was duly done; she admitted everything that was true. [Footnote: Farinacci quotes several passages from Beatrice’s confession; they seem to me touching in their simplicity.] Immediately the chains were removed from them all, and because for five months she had not seen her brothers, she expressed a wish to dine with them, and all four spent a very happy day together.

But next day they were separated once more; the two brothers were taken to the prison of Tordinona, while the women remained in the Savella. Our Holy Father the Pope, having seen the authentic document containing all their confessions, ordered that without further delay they should be tied to the tails of wild horses, and so put to death.

The whole of Rome shuddered on learning of this rigorous decree. A great number of cardinals and princes went to throw themselves on their knees before the Pope, imploring him to allow the poor wretches to present their defence.

“And they, did they give their aged father time to present his?” the Pope replied angrily.

Finally, by a special grace, he was pleased to allow a respite of five and twenty days. At once the leading avvocati in Rome began to write their pleadings in this case which had filled the town with pity and dismay. On the twenty-fifth day, they appeared in a body before His Holiness. Niccolo de' Angelis was the first to speak, but he had barely read the first line of his defence when Clement VIII interrupted him:

"And so, here in Rome," he exclaimed, "we find people who kill their father, and counsel afterwards to defend such people!"

All stood speechless, until Farinacci ventured to raise his voice.

"Most Holy Father," he said, "we are here not to defend the crime, but to prove, if we can, that one or more of these unfortunate people are innocent of the crime."

The Pope made a sign to him to speak, and he spoke for fully three hours, after which the Pope took their briefs from them all and dismissed them. As they were leaving the presence, Altieri was the last to go; he was afraid that he might have compromised himself, and turned to kneel before the Pope, saying:

"I could not help appearing in this case, since I am counsel for the poor."

To which the Pope replied:

"We are not surprised at you, but at the others."

The Pope refused to go to bed, but spent the whole night reading the pleadings of counsel, calling upon the Cardinal of San Marcello to help him in this task; His Holiness appeared so deeply touched that many people felt a spark of hope for the lives of the unhappy prisoners. In the hope of saving the sons, the counsel threw the whole onus of the crime upon Beatrice. As it had been proved in the trial that her father had on several occasions employed force with a criminal intention, the lawyers hoped that the murder would be pardoned in her case, as being justified in self-defence; and if so, when the principal author of the crime was granted her life, how could her brothers, who had acted at her persuasion, be put to death?

After this night devoted to his judicial duties, Clement VIII ordered that the accused persons should be taken back to prison and placed in secret confinement. This circumstance gave rise to great hopes in Rome, which throughout the whole of this case considered no one but Beatrice. It was alleged that she had been in love with Monsignor Guerra, but that she had never infringed the rules of the strictest virtue; it was impossible, therefore, in justice, to impute to her the crimes of a monster, and she was to be punished because she had made use of her right of self-defence; what would have been her punishment had she consented? Was it necessary that human justice should step in to increase the misery of a creature so lovable, so deserving of pity, and already in such a plight? After so sad a life, which had heaped upon her every form of misery before her sixteenth birthday, had she not acquired the right to a few days of greater happiness? The whole of Rome seemed to be briefed in her defence. Would she not have been pardoned if, when for the first time Francesco Cenci made a criminal assault upon her, she had stabbed him?

Pope Clement VIII was mild and merciful. We were beginning to hope that, a little ashamed of the burst of ill temper which had made him interrupt the counsels' pleadings, he would pardon one who had repelled force with force, not, to be accurate, at the moment of the original crime, but when the assailant tried to commit it anew. The whole of Rome was on tenterhooks, when the Pope received the news of the violent death of the Marchesa Costanza Santa Croce. Her son, Paolo Santa Croce, had killed the lady in question, who was sixty years old, by stabbing her with his dagger, because she would not bind herself to make him the heir to her whole fortune. The report added that Santa Croce had taken flight, and that there was little or no hope of arresting him. The Pope remembered the fratricide by the Massini, which had occurred quite recently.

Appalled by the frequency of these murders of near relatives, His Holiness felt that he would not be entitled to grant a pardon. When he received this fatal report of the Santa Croce murder, the Pope was at the palace of Monte Cavallo, where he was spending the eth of September, in order to be nearer, next morning, to the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where he was to consecrate as Bishop a German Cardinal.

On the Friday at the twenty-second hour (4 P.M.) he sent for Ferrante Taverna, the Governor of Rome (afterwards made Cardinal, for so singular a reason), and addressed him in the following words:

“We entrust the case of the Cenci to your hands, in order that justice may be done without delay.”

The Governor returned to his Palace deeply moved by the order he had received; he at once signed the sentence of death, and convened a congregation to decide upon the method of execution.

On Saturday morning, the llth of September, 1599, the first gentlemen of Rome, members of the Confraternity of the Confortatori, repaired to the two prisons, that of Corte Savella, where were Beatrice and her stepmother, and Tordinona, in which Giacomo and Bernardo Cenci were confined. Throughout the whole of the night between the Friday and the Saturday, the Roman nobles who were aware of what was happening did nothing but hasten from the palace of Monte Cavallo to those of the principal Cardinals, hoping to obtain at least the concession that the women might be put to death inside the prison, and not upon an ignominious scaffold; and that mercy be shewn to the young Bernardo Cenci, who, being only fifteen years old, could not have been admitted to the secret. The noble Cardinal Sforza was conspicuous for his zeal during that fatal night, but albeit so powerful a prince he could obtain nothing. The Santa Croce crime was a vile crime, committed for the sake of money, and the crime of Beatrice Cenci was committed in defence of her honour.

While the most powerful Cardinals were taking such fruitless pains, Farinacci, our great jurist, actually dared to make his way into the Pope’s presence; face to face with His Holiness, this remarkable man contrived to stir his listener’s conscience, and at length, by sheer importunity, wrested from him the life of Bernardo Cenci.

When the Pope made this important utterance, it was about four o’clock in the morning (of Saturday, the llth of September). All night long men had been at work on the piazza of the Ponte Sant’ Angelo preparing the scene of this cruel tragedy. All the necessary copies of the death sentence could not, however, be completed before five o’clock in the morning, so that it was not

until six o'clock that the fatal tidings could be conveyed to the wretched prisoners, who were peacefully asleep.

The girl, for the first few moments, could not even summon up strength to put on her clothes. She uttered piercing and continuous shrieks and gave way uncontrollably to the most terrible desperation.

"How is it possible, oh, God," she cried, "that I must die suddenly, like this?"

Lucrezia Petroni, on the other hand, said nothing that was not entirely proper; first of all, she fell on her knees and prayed, then calmly exhorted her daughter to accompany her to the chapel, where they would make preparation together for the great journey from life to death.

These words restored to Beatrice all her calm; just as she had shewn extravagance and want of control at first, so now she was reasonable and wise as soon as her stepmother had summoned up the resources of that noble soul. From that moment she was a mirror of constancy which all Rome admired.

She asked for a notary to draw up her will, which was permitted. She ordered that her body should be taken to San Pietro in Montorio; she left three hundred thousand francs to the Stimate (nuns of the Stigmata of Saint Francis); this sum was to provide dowries for fifty poor girls. This example moved the heart of Donna Lucrezia, who also made her will and ordered her body to be taken to San Giorgio; she left five hundred thousand francs to that church and made other pious bequests.

At eight o'clock they made their confession, heard mass and received the Holy Communion. But, before going to mass, Donna Beatrice reflected that it was not proper to appear on the scaffold, in the sight of the whole populace, in the rich garments which she was wearing. She ordered two gowns, one for herself, one for her mother. These gowns were made like nuns' habits, without ornaments on bosom or shoulders, and gathered only at the wide sleeves. The stepmother's gown was of black cotton; the girl's of blue taffeta, with a large cord fastening it at the waist.

When the gowns were brought, Donna Beatrice, who was on her knees, rose and said to Donna Lucrezia:

“My lady mother, the hour of our passion approaches; it would be well for us to make ready, to put on these other clothes, and for the last time to perform the mutual service of dressing each other.”

There had been erected on the Piazza, del Ponte Sant’ Angelo a huge scaffold with a block and a mannaja (a sort of guillotine). About the thirteenth hour (eight o’clock in the morning), the Company of the Misericordia came with their great crucifix to the gate of the prison. Giacomo Cenci was the first to emerge; he fell devoutly upon his knees at the threshold, made his prayer, and kissed the Sacred Wounds on the crucifix. He was followed by Bernardo Cenci, his young brother, who also had his hands bound and a little board before his eyes. The crowd was enormous, and a disturbance arose owing to a basin which fell from a window almost upon the head of one of the penitents who was holding a lighted torch by the side of the banner.

Everyone was gazing at the brothers, when suddenly the Fiscal of Rome came forward, and said:

“Don Bernardo, Our Sovereign Lord grants you your life; prepare to accompany your family, and pray to God for them.”

Thereupon his two confortatori removed the little board that covered his eyes. The executioner installed Giacomo Cenci on the cart and had removed his coat, as he was to be tortured with the pincers. When the executioner came to Bernardo, he verified the signature on the pardon, unbound him, removed his handcuffs, and, as he had no coat, for he was awaiting the pincers, the executioner set him on the cart and wrapped him in a rich cloak of broadcloth striped with gold. (It was said that this was the same cloak that was given by Beatrice to Marzio after the deed in the fortress of la Petrella.) The vast crowd that filled the street, the windows and the roofs, was suddenly stirred; one heard a deep and sullen murmur, people were beginning to tell one another that the boy had been pardoned.

The intoning of the Psalms began, and the procession moved slowly across the Piazza Navona towards the Savella prison. On reaching the prison gate the banner halted, the two women came out, made an act of adoration at the foot of the holy crucifix and then proceeded on foot, one following the other. They were dressed in the manner already described, the head of each being draped in a great taffeta veil which reached almost to her waist.

Donna Lucrezia, as a widow, wore a black veil and slippers of black velvet without heels, according to custom.

The girl's veil was of blue taffeta, like her dress; she had in addition a great veil of cloth of silver over her shoulders, a petticoat of violet cloth, and slippers of white velvet, elegantly laced and fastened with crimson cords. She appeared singularly charming as she walked, in this costume, and a tear came to every eye as the spectators caught sight of her slowly advancing in the rear of the procession.

Both women had their hands free, but their arms tied to their sides, so that each of them was able to carry a crucifix; they held these close to their eyes. The sleeves of their gowns were very wide, so that one saw their arms, which were covered by sleeved shifts fastened at the wrists, as is the custom in this country.

Donna Lucrezia, whose heart was less stout, wept almost continuously; the young Beatrice, on the other hand, shewed great courage; and, turning to gaze at each of the churches by which the procession passed, would fall on her knees for a moment and say in a firm voice: "Adoramus Te, Christe!"

Meanwhile, poor Giacomo Cenci was being tortured upon the cart, and shewed great constancy.

The procession had difficulty in crossing the lower end of the Piazza del Ponte S'ant' Angelo, so great was the number of carriages and the crowd of people. The women were taken straight to the chapel which had been made ready, and there Giacomo Cenci was afterwards brought.

Young Bernardo, wrapped in his striped cloak, was taken straight to the scaffold; whereupon everyone thought that he was going to be put to death,

and had not been pardoned. The poor boy was so frightened that he fell in a faint as soon as he had stepped on to the scaffold. He was revived with cold water and made to sit opposite the mannaja.

The executioner went to fetch Donna Lucrezia Petroni; her hands were tied behind her back, the veil no longer covered her shoulders. She appeared on the piazza accompanied by the banner, her head wrapped in the veil of black taffeta; there she made an act of reconciliation to God and kissed the Sacred Wounds. She was told to leave her slippers on the pavement; as she was very stout, she had some difficulty in climbing the scaffold. When she was on the scaffold and the black taffeta veil was taken from her, she was greatly ashamed to be seen with bare shoulders and bosom; she examined herself, then the mannaja, and, as a sign of resignation, raised her shoulders slightly; tears came to her eyes, she said: “O my God! . . . And you, my brethren, pray for my soul.”

Not knowing what was expected of her, she asked Alessandro, the chief headsman, what she ought to do. He told her to place herself astride the plank of the block. But this position seemed to her offensive to modesty, and she took a long time to assume it. (The details which follow are endurable by the Italian public, which likes to know everything with the utmost exactitude; let it suffice the French reader to know that this poor woman’s modesty led to her injuring her bosom; the executioner shewed her head to the people and then wrapped it in the black taffeta veil.)

While the mannaja was being put in order for the girl, a scaffold loaded with spectators fell, and many people were killed. They thus appeared in God’s presence before Beatrice.

When Beatrice saw the banner returning to the chapel to fetch her, she asked boldly:

“Is my lady mother really dead?”

They replied that it was so; she fell on her knees before the crucifix and prayed fervently for her stepmother’s soul. Then she spoke aloud and at great length to the crucifix.

“Lord, Thou hast come back for me, and I will follow Thee with a willing heart, despairing not of Thy mercy for my great sin,” etc.

She then repeated several Psalms and prayers, all in praise of God. When at length the executioner appeared before her with a cord, she said:

“Bind this body which is to be punished, and unbind this soul which is to win immortality and an eternal glory.”

Then she rose, said her prayer, left her slippers at the foot of the steps and, having mounted the scaffold, stepped nimbly across the plank, placed her neck beneath the mannaja, and made all the arrangements perfectly herself, so as to avoid being touched by the executioner. By the swiftness of her movements she prevented the crowd, at the moment when the taffeta veil was taken from her, from seeing her shoulders and bosom. The blow was a long time in falling, as an interruption occurred. During this time she called in a loud voice upon Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Virgin. [Footnote: A contemporary writer states that Clement VIII was extremely uneasy as to the salvation of Beatrice’s soul; as he knew that she had been unjustly sentenced, he feared an impatient revulsion. The moment she had placed her head upon the mannaja, the fortress of Sant’ Angelo, from which the mannaja was plainly visible, fired a gun. The Pope, who was engaged in prayer at Monte Cavallo, awaiting this signal, at once gave the girl the Papal major absolution in articula mortis. This accounts for the delay in carrying out the sentence, of which the chronicler speaks.]

Her body sprang with an impulsive movement at the fatal instant. Poor Bernardo Cenci, who had remained seated on the scaffold, fell once again in a faint, and it took his confortatori a good half hour and more to revive him. Then there appeared upon the scaffold Giacomo Cenci; but here again we must pass over details that are too harrowing. Giacomo Cenci was “broken” (mazzolato).

Immediately, Bernardo was taken back to prison; he was in a high fever and was bled.

As for the poor women, each of them was placed in her coffin and laid down a few feet away from the scaffold, near the statue of Saint Paul, which is the

first on the right-hand side on the Ponte Sant' Angelo. Round each coffin burned four candles of white wax.

Later, with all that remained of Giacomo Cenci, they were conveyed to the palace of the Florentine Consul. At a quarter past nine in the evening, [Footnote: This is the hour set apart, in Rome, for the obsequies of Princes. The funeral of a citizen starts at sunset; the lesser nobility are carried to church at the first hour of night, Cardinals and Princes at half-past two of the night, which, on the llth of September, corresponds to a quarter to ten.] the body of the girl, dressed in her own clothes and covered with a profusion of flowers, was carried to San Pietro in Montorio. She was exquisitely beautiful; looking at her, one would have said that she was asleep. She was buried in front of the high altar, and of Raphael's Transfiguration. She was escorted by fifty great candles, lighted, and by all the Franciscans in Rome.

Lucrezia Petroni was carried, at ten o'clock at night, to the Church of San Giorgio. During the course of this tragedy, the crowd was beyond number; as far as the eye could reach, one saw the streets packed with carriages and people, scaffoldings, windows and roofs covered with curious spectators. The sun's heat was so intense that day that many people lost consciousness. Any number of them took fever; and when the whole affair was at an end, at the nineteenth hour (a quarter to two), and the crowd dispersed, many people were suffocated, others trampled down by the horses. The number of deaths was considerable.

Donna Lucrezia Petroni was of middle height, or a little shorter, and, although fifty years old, was still a handsome woman. She had very fine features, a small nose, dark eyes, the skin of her face quite white with a fine complexion; her hair, which was not abundant, was chestnut.

Beatrice Cenci, who must inspire undying regret, was just sixteen; she was of short stature; her figure was charmingly rounded, and there were dimples in the centre of her cheeks, so that, lying dead and garlanded with flowers, she appeared to be asleep and even smiling, as she had so often lain when she was alive. Her mouth was small, her hair golden, and naturally curling. As she went to the scaffold these fair ringlets fell over her eyes, which gave her a certain charm and inspired pity.

Giacomo Cenci was of short stature, stout, with a pale face and black beard; he was about twenty-six years old when he died.

Bernardo Cenci closely resembled his sister, and as he wore his hair long like hers, many people, when he appeared on the scaffold, mistook him for her.

The heat of the sun had been so intense that a number of the spectators of this tragedy died during the night, and among them Ubaldino Ubaldini, a young man of rare beauty who had until then been in perfect health. He was brother to Signor Renzi, so well known in Rome. Thus the shades of the Cenci left this world numerously escorted.

Yesterday, which was Tuesday the 14th of September, 1599, the penitents of San Marcello, on the occasion of the Feast of the Holy Cross, made use of their privilege to deliver from prison Don Bernardo Cenci, who has bound himself to pay within a year four hundred thousand francs to the Santissima Trinità del Ponte Sisto.

Added by another hand.

It is from him that the Francesco and Bernardo Cenci, now alive, descend.

The famous Farinacci, who, by his persistence, saved young Cenci's life, afterwards published his pleadings. He gives only an extract from pleading no. 66, which he declaimed before Clement VIII on behalf of the Cenci. This pleading, in the Latin tongue, would occupy fully six pages, and I cannot insert it here; this I regret, as it portrays the mental attitude of 1599; it seems to me eminently reasonable. Many years after 1599, Farinacci, when sending his pleadings to the press, added a note to this speech in defence of the Cenci: Omnes fuerunt ultimo supplicio effecti, excepto Bernardo qui ad triremes cum bonorum confiscatione condemnatus fuit, ac etiam ad interessendum aliorum morti prout interfuit. The end of this Latin note is touching, but I expect the reader is tired of so long a story.

THE DUCHESS OF PALLIANO

Translated by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff

Palermo, July 22nd, 1838.

I am nothing of a naturalist, I have only a very moderate acquaintance with the Greek language; my chief object in coming to visit Sicily has not been to observe the phenomena of Etna, nor to throw light, for my own or for other people's benefit, on all that the old Greek writers have said about Sicily. I sought first of all the pleasure of the eyes, which is considerable in this strange land. It resembles Africa, or so people say; but what to my mind is quite certain is that it resembles Italy only in its devouring passions. The Sicilians are a race of whom one might well say that the word impossible does not exist for them once they are inflamed by love or by hatred, and hatred, in this fair land, never arises from any pecuniary interest.

I observe that in England, and above all in France, one often hears people speak of Italian passion, of the frenzied passion which was to be found in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In our time, that noble passion is dead, quite dead, among the classes that have become infected with the desire to imitate French ways, and the modes of behaviour in fashion in Paris or in London.

I am well aware that I may be reminded that, from the time of Charles V (1530), Naples, Florence and Rome even were inclined to imitate Spanish ways; but were not these noble social customs based upon the boundless respect which every man worthy of the name ought to have for the motions of his own heart? Far from excluding emphasis, they exaggerated it, whereas the first maxim of the fats who imitated the Duc de Richelieu, round about

1760, was to appear moved by nothing. The maxim of the English dandies, whom they now copy at Naples in preference to the French fats, is it not to appear bored by everything, superior to everything?

Thus Italian passion has ceased to exist, for a century past, among the good society of that country.

In order to form some idea of this Italian passion, of which our novelists speak with such assurance, I have been obliged to turn to history; and even then the major histories, written by men of talent, and often too pompous, give us practically no details. They do not condescend to take note of the foolish actions except when these are committed by kings or princes. I have had recourse to the local history of each city; but I am appalled by the abundance of material. Every little town proudly offers you its history in three or four quarto volumes of print, and seven or eight volumes in manuscript; the latter almost undecipherable, teeming with abbreviations, giving unusual shapes to the letters, and, at the most interesting moments, crammed with forms of speech in use in the district but unintelligible twenty leagues away. For, in the whole of this fair land of Italy, whose surface love has sown with so many tragedies, three cities only, Florence, Siena and Rome, speak more or less as they write; everywhere else the written language is a hundred leagues apart from the spoken.

What is known as Italian passion, that is to say the passion that seeks its own satisfaction, and not to give one's neighbour an enhanced idea of oneself, begins with the revival of society, in the twelfth century, and dies out, among people of refinement at least, about the year 1734. At this date the Bourbons ascend the throne of Naples in the person of Don Carlos, son of a Farnese heiress married as his second wife to Philip V, that melancholy grandson of Louis XIV, so intrepid amid shot and shell, so listless, and so passionately fond of music. We know that for twenty-four years the sublime eunuch Farinelli sang to him every day three favourite airs, which never varied.

A philosophic mind may find something curious in the details of a passion as felt in Rome or Naples, but I must say that nothing seems to me more absurd than those novels that give Italian names to their characters. Are we not all agreed that passions alter whenever we move a hundred leagues farther north? Is love the same thing at Marseilles as in Paris? At most, we may say

that countries which have long been subjected to the same form of government shew a sort of outward similarity in their social customs.

Scenery, like passions and music, changes also whenever we move three or four degrees farther north. A Neapolitan landscape would seem absurd in Venetia, were there not a convention, even in Italy, to admire the fine works of nature round Naples. In Paris, we go one better, we imagine that the appearance of the forests and tilled plains is absolutely the same round Naples as round Venice, and would like Canaletto, for instance, to use absolutely the same colours as Salvator Rosa.

But the crowning absurdity, surely, is an English lady endowed with all the perfections of her Island, but considered not to be in a position to portray hatred and love, even in that Island: Mrs. Anne Radcliffe giving Italian names and grand passions to the characters of her celebrated novel: The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents.

I shall make no attempt to adorn the simplicity, the occasionally startling bluntness of the all too true narrative which I submit to the reader's indulgence; for instance, I translate literally the reply of the Duchess of Palliano to the declaration of love made by her cousin Marcello Capecce. This family monograph occurs, for some reason, at the end of the second volume of a manuscript history of Palermo, of which I can furnish no details.

This narrative, which I have shortened considerably, much to my regret (I omit a mass of characteristic features), consists of the ultimate adventures of the ill-fated house of Carafa, rather than of the interesting history of a single passion. Literary vanity suggests to me that perhaps it might not have been impossible for me to enhance the interest of several situations by developing them farther, that is to say, by guessing and relating to the reader, with details, what the characters felt. But can I, a young Frenchman, born north of Paris, be quite sure of my power to guess what was felt by these Italian hearts in the year 1559? At the very most, I can hope to be able to guess what may appear elegant and thrilling to French readers in 1838.

This passionate manner of feeling which prevailed in Italy about the year 1559 required deeds, not words. And so the reader will find very little conversation in the following narrative. This is a handicap to my translation,

accustomed as we are to the long conversations of the characters in our fiction; for them a conversation is a duel. The story for which I claim all the reader's indulgence shews a singular element introduced by the Spaniards into Italian manners. I have nowhere departed from the office of a translator. The faithful reproduction of the mental attitudes of the sixteenth century, and even of the narrative style of the chronicler who, apparently, was a gentleman attached to the household of the unfortunate Duchess of Palliano, constitutes, to my mind, the chief merit of this tragic tale, if there be any merit in it.

The strictest Spanish etiquette prevailed at the court of the Duke of Palliano. Bear in mind that each Cardinal, each Roman Prince had a similar court, and you will be able to form some idea of the spectacle furnished, in 1559. by the civilisation of the city of Rome. Do not forget that this was the period in which Philip II, requiring for one of his intrigues the support of two Cardinals, bestowed upon each of them a revenue of two hundred thousand lire in ecclesiastical benefices. Rome, although lacking an effective army, was the capital of the world. Paris, in 1559, was a city of barbarians not without charm.

Literal Translation of an Old Narrative Written About the Year 1566

Gian Pietro Carafa, although sprung from one of the noblest families of the Kingdom of Naples, behaved in a harsh, rude, violent manner more befitting a keeper of flocks or herds. He assumed the long coat (the cassock) and left at an early age for Rome, where he benefited by the favour of his cousin, Olivero Carafa, Cardinal and Archbishop of Naples. Alexander VI, that mighty man, who knew everything and could do anything, made him his cameriere (roughly what we should call nowadays groom of the chambers). Julius II nominated him Archbishop of Chieti; Pope Paul created him Cardinal, and finally, after endless intriguing and disputes among the Cardinals enclosed in Conclave, he was elected Pope, taking the name of Paul IV; he was then seventy-eight years old. The very Cardinals who had just called him to the Throne of Saint Peter soon shuddered when they

thought of the firmness and fierce, inexorable piety of the master whom they had set over themselves.

The news of this unexpected election caused a revolution at Naples and Palermo. Before many days had passed, Rome saw arrive within her gates innumerable members of the illustrious house of Carafa. All of them found places; but, as was only natural, the Pope shewed particular favour to his three nephews, sons of the Conte di Montorio, his brother.

Don Giovanni, the eldest, who was already married, was made Duke of Palliano. This duchy, taken from Marcantonio Colonna, to whom it belonged, included a large number of villages and small towns. Don Carlo, the second of His Holiness's nephews, was a Knight of Malta and had seen active service; he was created Cardinal, Legate of Bologna and First Minister. He was a man of great determination; loyal to the traditions of his family, he made bold to hate the most powerful monarch in the world (Philip II, King of Spain and of the Indies), and furnished him with proofs of his hatred. As for the new Pope's third nephew, Don Antonio Carafa, since he was married, the Pope made him Marchese di Montebello. Finally he proposed to give in marriage to Francis, Dauphin of France and son of King Henry II, a daughter whom his brother had got by a second marriage; Paul IV was to settle upon her as her dowry the Kingdom of Naples, which would first be taken from Philip II, King of Spain. The Carafa family hated this mighty king, who, with the help of the said family's own weaknesses, succeeded in wiping it out, as you shall see.

After he had ascended the throne of Saint Peter, the mightiest in the world, and one which, at that time, eclipsed even that of the illustrious Spanish monarch, Paul IV, as we have seen occur with most of his successors, set an example of all the virtues. He was a great Pope and a great Saint; he set to work to reform abuses within the Church, and by so doing to avoid the General Council for which all parties at the Roman Court were clamouring, but which a wise policy refused to grant.

In accordance with the custom of that age, which our age has let fall into oblivion, the custom which forbade a Sovereign to repose his confidence in men who might have interests other than his own, the States of his Holiness were governed despotically by his three nephews. The Cardinal was First

Minister and carried out his uncle's wishes; the Duke of Palliano had been created General of the forces of Holy Church; and the Marchese di Montebello, Captain of the Palace Guard, allowed only such persons as it suited him to admit to cross its threshold. Soon these young men were committing the wildest excesses; they began by appropriating for their own use the possessions of the families opposed to their rule. The people did not know where to turn to obtain justice. Not only had they cause to be afraid for their possessions, but, horrible to relate in the land of the chaste Lucrèce, the honour of their wives and daughters was not safe. The Duke of Palliano and his brothers carried off the most beautiful women; it was enough to have been so unfortunate as to take their fancy. People were amazed to see them shew no respect for exalted birth; worse still, they were in no way restrained by the sanctity of the cloister. The people, in despair, knew of no one to whom they might complain, so great was the terror which the three brothers had inspired in everyone who approached the Pope's presence; they were insolent to the Ambassadors even.

The Duke had married, before his uncle's rise to greatness, Violante di Cardone, of a family of Spanish origin which, at Naples, belonged to the highest aristocracy.

It was numbered in the Seggio di nido.

Violante, famed for her rare beauty and for the charm which she knew how to assume when she sought to attract, was famed even more for her overweening pride. But, to do her justice, it would have been difficult to have a moro exalted mind, as she shewed to all the world by admitting nothing, in the hour of her death, to the Capuchin friar who came to shrive her. She knew by heart and used to repeat with infinite charm the admirable Orlando of Messer Ariosto, most of the Sonnets of the divine Petrarch, the Tales of Pecorone, etc. But she was even more entrancing when she deigned to entertain her company with the odd ideas that suggested themselves to her mind.

She had a son who was styled Duca di Cavi. Her brother, Don Ferrante, Conte d'Aliffe, came to Rome, attracted by the prosperous state of his brothers-inlaw.

The Duke of Palliano maintained a splendid court; the scions of the first families of Naples fought for the honour of belonging to it. Among those whom he most cherished, Rome marked out, by its admiration, Marcello Capecce (of the Seggio di Nido), a young gentleman celebrated at Naples for his intelligence, no less than for the godlike beauty which heaven had bestowed upon him.

The Duchess had as favourite Diana Brancaccio, then thirty years of age, closely related to the Marchesa di Montebello, her sister-inlaw. It was rumoured in Rome that, with this favourite, she threw off her pride; that she confided to her all her secrets. But these secrets related only to politics; the Duchess aroused passions in others, but reciprocated none.

On the advice of Cardinal Carafa, the Pope declared war against the King of Spain, and the King of France sent to the Pope's assistance an army commanded by the Duc de Guise.

But we must confine ourselves to events at home, inside the court of the Duke of Palliano.

Capeece had long appeared more or less mad; he was seen to perform the strangest actions; the fact was that the poor young man had fallen passionately in love with the Duchess, his mistress, but dared not reveal his condition to her. At the same time, he did not absolutely despair of attaining his end, for he saw the Duchess intensely annoyed by a husband who neglected her. The Duke of Palliano was all powerful in Rome, and the Duchess knew, without any shadow of doubt, that almost every day the most famous beauties among the ladies of Rome came to visit her husband in her own palazzo, and this was an insult to which she could not grow reconciled. Among the chaplains to His Holiness Pope Paul IV was a respectable cleric with whom he used to repeat his breviary. This gentleman, at the risk of his own downfall, and perhaps at the instigation of the Spanish Ambassador, made bold one day to reveal to the Pope all his nephews' misdeeds. The holy pontiff was ill with grief; he tried not to believe the report; but overwhelming evidence came in from every side. It was on the first day of the year 1559 that the event occurred which confirmed all the Pope's suspicions, and perhaps brought him to a decision. It was therefore, on the actual Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord, a coincidence which greatly

aggravated the offence in the eyes of so pious a Sovereign, that Andréa Lanfranchi, secretary to the Duke of Palliano, gave a magnificent supper to Cardinal Carafa, and wishing to add to the excitement of the palate that of the flesh, invited to this supper Martuccia, one of the most beautiful, most notorious and wealthiest courtesans of the noble city of Rome. Fate so willed it that Capecce, the Duke's favourite, the same who was secretly in love with the Duchess, and was reckoned the handsomest man in the capital of the world, had for some time past been attached to Martuccia. On the evening in question he searched for her in all the places where he had any hope of finding her. Not seeing her anywhere, and having heard that there was a supper party at Lanfranchi's house, he had a suspicion of what was happening, and towards midnight appeared at Lanfranchi's door, accompanied by a numerous body of armed men.

The door was opened to him; he was invited to sit down and partake of the feast; but, after a few words had been exchanged with a certain constraint, he made a signal to Martuccia to rise and leave the house with him. While she was hesitating, greatly confused and with an inkling of what was going to happen, Capecce rose from the chair on which he was sitting, and, going up to the girl, took her by the hand, and attempted to carry her off with him. The Cardinal, in whose honour she had come to the party, strongly opposed her departure; Capecce persisted, endeavouring to drag her from the room.

The Cardinal First Minister, who, that evening, had assumed a garb very different from that which indicated his high rank, took his sword in hand, and endeavoured, with the vigour and courage which all Rome knew him to possess, to prevent the girl from leaving. Marcello, blind with rage, summoned his men; but they were mostly Neapolitans, and, when they recognised first of all the Duke's secretary and then the Cardinal, whom the unusual clothes which he was wearing had at first disguised from them, they sheathed their swords again, declined to fight, and intervened to settle the dispute.

During this uproar, Martuccia, who was surrounded by the rest, while Marcello Capecce kept hold of her left hand, was clever enough to escape. As soon as Marcello noticed her absence he hastened after her, and his men all followed him.

But the darkness of the night gave rise to the strangest reports, and on the morning of January 2nd the capital was filled with accounts of the perilous encounter which had occurred, it was, said, between the Cardinal's nephew and Marcello Capecce. The Duke of Palliano, Commander in Chief of the forces of the Church, understood the affair to be more serious than it actually was, and, as he was not on the best of terms with his brother the Minister, had Lanfranchi arrested that same night, while early on the following morning Marcello himself was put in prison. Then it was discovered that no life had been lost, and that these imprisonments served only to increase the scandal, the whole of which fell upon the Cardinal's shoulders. The prisoners were quickly set at liberty, and the three brothers combined their enormous influence to hush up the affair. They expected at first to be successful; but, on the third day, the whole story came to the ears of the Pope. He sent for his two nephews and spoke to them as a Prince might speak who was so pious and so profoundly shocked.

On the fifth day of January, which saw a great number of Cardinals assembled in the congregation of the Holy Office, the Pope was the first to speak of this horrible affair; he asked the Cardinals present how they had dared refrain from bringing it to his knowledge:

"You keep silence! And yet the scandal affects the sublime dignity with which you are invested! Cardinal Carafa has had the audacity to appear in the public streets in lay attire and with a drawn sword in his hand. And with what object? To take forcible possession of a shameless harlot!"

One may imagine the deathly silence that prevailed among all his courtiers during this outburst against the First Minister. Here was an old man of eighty inveighing against a beloved nephew, the master until then of his will. In his indignation, the Pope spoke of taking the hat from his nephew.

The Pope's anger was fanned by the Ambassador of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who came to complain to him of a recent insult on the part of the Cardinal First Minister. This Cardinal, so powerful until then, presented himself before His Holiness in the course of his duty. The Pope kept him for four whole hours in the ante-room, waiting where everyone could see him, then sent him away without admitting him to an audience. One may imagine the blow to the Minister's unbounded pride. The Cardinal was annoyed, but

not disposed to yield; he felt that an old man bowed down with years, dominated all his life long by the love he bore his family, and moreover little accustomed to the handling of temporal matters, would be obliged to have recourse to his activity. The saintly Pope's virtue won the day; he summoned the Cardinals together, and after gazing at them for a long time without speaking, finally burst into tears and had no hesitation in making what apology he could.

"The feebleness of age," he said to them, "and the attention that I pay to matters of religion, in which, as you know, I am trying to destroy all the abuses, have led me to entrust my temporal authority to my three nephews ', they have abused that authority, and I banish them now for ever."

A brief was then read by which the nephews were deprived of all their dignities and confined to miserable villages. The Cardinal Prime Minister was banished to Città Lavinia, the Duke of Palliano to Soriano, and the Marchese to Montebello; by this brief, the Duke was deprived of his fixed revenue, which amounted to seventy-two thousand piastres (more than a million in 1838).

There could be no question of disobeying these stern orders: the Carafa had as enemies and watchers the entire population of Rome, who detested them.

The Duke of Palliano, escorted by the Conte d'Aliffe, his brother-inlaw, and by Leonardo del Cardine, established his quarters in the little village of Soriano, while the Duchess and her mother-inlaw came to live at Gallese, a wretched hamlet within two leagues of Soriano.

The neighbourhood is charming, but they were in exile; and they were banished from Rome, where but a little while since they had held an insolent sway.

Marcello Capecce had followed his mistress, with the rest of the courtiers, to the wretched village to which she had been banished. Instead of the devotion of all Rome this woman, so powerful a few days earlier, who had exulted in her position with all the arrogance of her pride, now found herself surrounded only by simple peasants, whose very amazement kept her in mind of her downfall. She had no consolation; her uncle was so old that

probably death would overtake him before he had recalled his nephews, and, to complete their misfortune, the three brothers hated one another. It was even said that the Duke and the Marchese, who were not liable to the fiery passions of the Cardinal, alarmed by his excesses, had gone the length of denouncing them to the Pope their uncle.

Amidst the horror and shame of this abject disgrace, something occurred which, unfortunately for the Duchess and for Capecce himself, shewed plainly that, in Rome, it had not been a genuine passion that had drawn him in the wake of Martuccia.

One day when the Duchess had sent for him to give him an order, he found himself alone with her, a thing which did not happen more than once, perhaps, in a whole year. When he saw that there was no one else in the room in which the Duchess received him, Capecce stopped short and remained silent. He went to the door to see whether there was anyone that could hear them in the next room, then found courage to speak as follows:

“Signora, do not vex yourself, do not take offence at the strange words which I am about to have the temerity to utter. For a long time past I have loved you more than life itself. If, in a rash moment, I have ventured to gaze as a lover upon your heavenly beauty, you must impute the fault not to me, but to the supernatural force which urges and distracts me. I am in torment, I burn; I ask for nothing to quench the flame that is consuming me, but simply that your generosity may take pity upon a servant filled with misgivings and humility.”

The Duchess appeared surprised, and, what was more, annoyed.

“Why, Marcello, what have you ever seen in me,” she said to him, “to encourage you to speak to me of love? Does my life, does my conversation so far depart from the rules of decent behaviour as to afford you any justification for such insolence? How could you have the audacity to suppose that I could give myself to you or to any other man, except my lord and master? I forgive you for what you have said to me, because I consider that you are in a frenzied state; but take care not to make the same mistake again, or I swear I will have you punished for both pieces of impertinence at once.”

The Duchess left him in a towering passion, and indeed Capecce had failed to observe the laws of prudence: he should have let his love be guessed and not have spoken. He stood there speechless, greatly alarmed lest the Duchess should tell her husband of what had happened.

But the sequel proved to be very different from his apprehensions. In the solitude of this village, the proud Duchess of Palliano could not help taking into her confidence and revealing what had been said to her to her favourite lady in waiting, Diana Brancaccio. This was a woman of thirty, devoured by burning passions. She had red hair (the chronicler harps again and again upon this peculiarity, which to him seems to account for all Diana Brancaccio's mad actions). She was hotly in love with Domiziano Fornari, a gentleman attached to the household of the Marchese di Montebello. She wished to take him as her husband; but would the Marchese and his wife, with whom she had the honour to be connected by ties of "blood, ever consent to her marriage to a man actually in their service? This obstacle was insurmountable, or seemed so at least.

There was but one chance of success: she would have to obtain some practical support from the Duke of Palliano, the Marchese's elder brother, and Diana was not without some hope in this direction. The Duke treated her as one of his family rather than as a servant. He was a man with an element of simplicity and goodness in his nature, and attached infinitely less importance than his brothers to questions of pure etiquette. Although, as a young man would, the Duke made full use of all the advantages of his exalted position, and was anything but faithful to his wife, he loved her dearly, and, so far as one might judge, could not refuse her any favour were she to ask it with a certain amount of persistence.

The confession which Capecce had ventured to make to the Duchess seemed to the dark mind of Diana an unlooked-for piece of good fortune. Her mistress had been until then maddeningly prudent; should she prove capable of feeling passion, were she to commit a sin, at every moment she would need Diana, who in turn might look for anything in the world from a woman whose secrets she would know.

So far from giving any hint to the Duchess first of all of what she owed to herself, and then of the terrible danger to which she would be exposing

herself amid so sharp-sighted a court, Diana, carried away by the heat of her passion, spoke of Marcello Capecce to her mistress as she was in the habit of speaking to herself of Domiziano Fornari. In the long conversations with which they be-.guiled their solitude, she found some pretext daily for recalling to the Duchess's memory the charm and beauty of that poor Marcello who seemed so unhappy; he belonged, like the Duchess, to one of the first families in Naples, his manners were as noble as his blood, and he lacked only those worldly possessions which a caprice of fortune might at any time bestow upon him, in order to become in every respect the equal of the woman whom he ventured to love.

Diana was delighted to observe that the first effect of these speeches was to increase the confidence which the Duchess placed in her.

She did not forget to give a report of what was happening to Marcello Capecce. During the burning heat of that summer the Duchess often strolled in the woods which surround Gallese. At the close of day she would await the turn of the sea breeze on the charming hills which rise in the midst of those woods, hills from the summit of which the sea is visible at a distance of less than two leagues.

Without infringing the strict laws of etiquette, Marcello also might stroll in these woods: he would conceal himself there, it was said, and took care only to catch the Duchess's eye when she had been led to think kindly of him by the speeches of Diana Brancaccio. The latter would then give Marcello a signal.

Diana, seeing her mistress on the point of yielding to the fatal passion the seeds of which she herself had sown in the other's heart, herself gave way to the violent love which Domiziano Fornari had inspired in her. Now at last she was certain of being able to marry him. But Domiziano was a sober-minded young man, cold and reserved by nature; the extravagances of his fiery mistress, so far from attaching him to her, soon became distasteful to him. Diana Brancaccio was closely related to the Carafa; he might be certain of being stabbed, should the faintest rumour of his amours come to the ears of the terrible Cardinal Carafa who, albeit younger than the Duke of Palliano, was, as a matter of fact, the real head of the family.

The Duchess had yielded, some time since, to Capecce's passion, when one fine day Domiziano Fornari was not to be found in the village to which the court of the Marchese di Montebello had been banished. He had disappeared: it was learned later on that he had taken ship in the little port of Nettuno; doubtless he had changed his name, and nothing more was ever heard of him.

How is one to describe Diana's feelings? After listening good-humouredly for some time to her inveighings against fate, one day the Duchess of Palliano let her see that this topic of conversation seemed to her to be exhausted. Diana saw herself scorned by her lover; her heart was a prey to the most cruel forces; she drew the strangest conclusion from the momentary irritation which the Duchess had felt on hearing a repetition of her complaints. Diana persuaded herself that it was the Duchess who had compelled Domiziano Fornari to leave her for ever, and who, moreover, had furnished him with the means of travelling. This fantastic idea had no basis apart from certain remonstrances which the Duchess had once addressed to her. Her suspicion was swiftly followed by revenge. She sought an audience of the Duke and told him all that had occurred between his wife and Marcello. The Duke refused to believe her.

"Bear in mind," he told her, "that during the last fifteen years I have not had the least fault to find with the Duchess; she has withstood the temptations of the court and the pitfalls of the brilliant position we enjoyed in Rome; the most attractive Princes, the Duc de Guise himself even, the General of the French Army, found it a waste of time, and you would have her yield to a mere Esquire!"

As ill luck would have it, the Duke finding time hang on his hands at Soriano, the village to which he had been banished, and which was but a couple of leagues from that in which his wife was living, Diana managed to secure frequent audiences from him, without their coming to the Duchess's knowledge. Diana had an amazing faculty of invention; her passion made her eloquent. She furnished the Duke with a mass of details; revenge had become her sole pleasure. She repeated that, almost every night, Capecce made his way into the Duchess's room about eleven o'clock, and did not leave until two or three in the morning. These reports made so little impression, at first, on the Duke's mind, that he refused to take the trouble to

ride a couple of leagues at midnight in order to go to Gallese and pay a surprise visit to his wife's room.

But one evening when he happened to be at Gallese, the sun had set, and yet it was still light; Diana, quite dishevelled, made her way into the room in which the Duke was. Everyone else withdrew. She informed him that Marcello Capecce had just entered the Duchess's bedroom. The Duke, who doubtless was in an ill humour at the moment, took up his dagger and ran to his wife's room, which he entered by a secret door. There he found Mar-cello Capecce. The lovers did, indeed, change colour when they saw him come in; but, as a matter of fact, there was nothing reprehensible in their attitude. The Duchess was in bed, engaged in making a note of a small sum which she had just paid; a maid was in the room; Marcello was on his feet, at a distance of three yards from the bed.

The Duke in his fury seized Marcello by the throat, and dragged him into an adjoining closet, where he ordered him to fling away the dirk and dagger with which he was armed. After which the Duke summoned the men of his guard, by whom Marcello was at once led away to the prisons of Soriano.

The Duchess was left in her own house, but under close guard.

The Duke was by no means a cruel man; it appears that he did think of concealing the scandal of the affair, so as not to be obliged to have recourse to the extreme measures which honour required of him. He wished it to be thought that Marcello was being kept in prison for a wholly different reason, and taking as a pretext a number of huge toads which Marcello had bought at a high price two or three months previously, he gave out that the young man had attempted to poison him. But the true nature of the crime was too well known, and the Cardinal, his brother, sent to ask him when he was going to think of washing out in the blood of the guilty the insult that had been offered to their family.

The Duke called to his assistance the Conte d'Aliffe, his wife's brother, and Antonio Torando, a friend of the family. The three of them, forming a sort of tribunal, passed judgment upon Marcello Capecce, accused of adultery with the Duchess.

The instability of human affairs brought it to pass that Pope Pius IV, who succeeded Paul IV, belonged to the Spanish faction. He could refuse nothing to King Philip II, who demanded of him the lives of the Cardinal and of the Duke of Palliano. The brothers were brought before the local tribunal, and from the minutes of the trial which they had to undergo we learn all the circumstances of the death of Marcello Capecce.

One of the many witnesses who were called gave evidence as follows:

"We were at Soriano; the Duke, my master, held a long conversation with the Conte d'Aliffe. . . . Late at night we went down into one of the cellars, where the Duke had made ready the cords required for putting the accused to the question. There were present the Duke, the Conte d'Aliffe, Don Antonio Torando and myself.

"The first witness to be called was Captain Camillo Griffone, the intimate friend and confidant of Capecce. The Duke addressed him thus:

"'Tell the truth, my friend. What do you know of Marcello's doings in the Duchess's room?'

"'I know nothing: for the last three weeks and more I have not spoken to Marcello.'

"As he refused obstinately to say anything further, the Lord Duke called in some of his guards from outside. Griffone was tied to the cord by the Podestà of Soriano. The guards pulled the cords, and in this way raised the witness four fingers'-breadth from the ground. After the Captain had been suspended thus for fully a quarter of an hour, he said:

"'Let me down and I will tell you all I know.'

"When they had set him down on the ground, the guards withdrew, and we remained alone in the cellar with him.

"'It is true that on several occasions I have gone with Marcello to the Duchess's room,' said the Captain, 'but I know nothing more than that, because I used to wait for him in a courtyard near at hand until one o'clock in the morning.'

“The guards were at once recalled, and, on an order from the Duke, drew him up again, so that his feet were clear of the ground. Presently the Captain cried out:

“‘Let me down, I will speak the truth. It is true,’ he went on, ‘that, for many months past, I have observed that Marcello was making love to the Duchess, and I meant to inform Your Excellency or Don Leonardo. The Duchess used to send every morning to inquire for Marcello; she kept making him little presents, among other things preserves of fruit prepared with great care and very costly;

I have seen Marcello wearing little golden chains of marvellous workmanship which he had obviously had from the Duchess.’

“After making this statement, the Captain was taken back to prison. The Duchess’s porter was brought in, but said that he knew nothing; he was bound to the cord and raised in the air. After half an hour he said:

“‘Let me down and I will tell you all I know.’

“Once on the ground again, he pretended to know nothing; he was raised once more. After half an hour he was let down; he explained that he had been only a short time in the Duchess’s personal service. As it was possible that the man did really know nothing, he was sent back to prison. All this had taken a long time on account of the guards, who were made to leave the room each time. They were intended to suppose that the trial was one of an attempt at poisoning, with the venom extracted from the toads.

“The night was already far advanced when the Duke ordered in Marcello Capecce. The guards having left the room, and the door being duly locked:

“‘What business have you,’ he asked him, ‘in the Duchess’s room, that you stay there until one, two, and sometimes four o’clock in the morning?’

“Marcello denied everything; the guards were called, and he was strung up; the cord dislocated his arms; unable to endure the pain, he asked to be let down; he was set upon a chair; but after that became confused in his speech and did not seem himself to know what he was saying. The guards were

called and strung him up once more; after a long spell, he asked to be let down.

"'It is true," he said,'that I have entered the Duchess's apartment at these improper hours; but I was making love to Signora Diana Brancaccio, one of her Excellency's ladies, to whom I had given a promise of marriage, and who has granted me all, save such things as honour for-bids.'

"Marcello was led back to prison, where he was confronted with the Captain; also with Diana, who denied everything.

"After this Marcello was brought back to the cellar; when we were near the door:

"'My Lord Duke,' he said, 'Your Excellency will recall that he has promised me my life if I tell the whole truth. It is not necessary to give me the cord again; I am going to tell you everything.'

"He then went up to the Duke, and, in a tremulous and barely articulate voice, told him that it was true that he had won the favour of the Duchess. At these words, the Duke flung himself upon Marcello and bit him in the cheek; he then drew his dagger, and I saw that he was on the point of stabbing the culprit. At this point I suggested that it would be as well for Marcello to write down in his own hand what he had just confessed, and that such a document would serve as a justification of His Excellency's action. We went into the cellar where there were writing materials; but the cord had so injured Marcello's arm and hand, that he was able to write only these few words: 'Yes, I have betrayed my lord; yes, I have stolen his honour.'

"The Duke read the words as Marcello wrcte them. At this point, he flung himself upon Marcello and struck him three blows with his dagger, from which he expired. Diana Brancaccio was present, within an arm's-length, more dead than alive, and, no doubt, repenting a thousand times over what she had done.

"'Woman unworthy to be of noble birth,' cried the Duke, 'and sole cause of my dishonour, for which you have laboured to serve your own infamous pleasures, I must now give you the reward of all your treacheries.'

“So saying he seized her by the hair and sawed through her throat with a knife. The wretched woman shed a torrent of blood, and at length fell down dead.

“The Duke had the two bodies flung into a sewer that ran by the prison.”

The young Cardinal Alfonso Carafa, son of the Marchese di Montebello, the one member of the family that Paul IV had kept in his court, felt it his duty to tell him of these events. The Pope’s only answer was:

“And the Duchess, what have they done with her?”

It was generally thought, in Rome, that these words were tantamount to the unfortunate woman’s death warrant. But the Duke could not steel himself to that great sacrifice, either because she was pregnant or because of the intense affection he had felt for her in the past.

Three months after the great act of virtue which the saintly Pope Paul IV had performed in parting from the whole of his family, he fell ill, and, after three months of illness, expired on the 18th of August, 1559.

The Cardinal wrote letter after letter to the Duke of Palliano, incessantly reiterating that their honour demanded the death of the Duchess. Seeing their uncle dead and not knowing what the next Pope’s attitude might be, he was anxious to have the whole affair finished as quickly as possible.

The Duke, a simple man, good natured and far less scrupulous than the Cardinal over mere points of honour, could not bring himself to the terrible extremes demanded of him. He reminded himself that he had frequently been unfaithful to the Duchess, without taking the slightest pairs to conceal his infidelities from her, and that they might have led so proud a woman to take her revenge. At the very moment of entering the Conclave, after hearing mass and receiving the Holy Communion, the Cardinal wrote to him again that he was being tormented by these continual delays, and vowed that, if the Duke did not finally make up his mind to do what the honour of their house required of him, he would take no further interest in his affairs, and would make no attempt to be of use to him either in the Conclave or with the new Pope. A reason quite unconnected with the point of honour helped to

determine the Duke's action. Although the Duchess was closely guarded, she contrived (it is said) to send word to Marcantonio Colonna, the Duke's mortal enemy, on account of his Duchy of Palliano which Carafa had secured for himself, that if Marcantonio were to succeed in saving her life and delivering her from captivity, she, for her part, would put him in possession of the fortress of Palliano, the commandant of which was her devoted servant. On the 28th of August, 1559, the Duke sent to Gallese two companies of soldiers. On the 3oth, Don Leonardo del Cardine, the Duke's kinsman, and Don Ferrante, Conte d'Aliffe, the Duchess's brother, arrived at Gallese, and entered the Duchess's apartments to take her life. They told her that she was to die; she received the news without the slightest change of countenance. She wished first to make her confession and to hear the Holy Mass. Then, on these two gentlemen's approaching her, she observed that they were not acting in concert. She asked whether there were an order from the Duke, her husband, authorising her death.

"Yes, Signora," replied Don Leonardo.

The Duchess asked to see it; Don Ferrante shewed it to her.

(I find in the report of the Duke's trial the deposition of the friars who were present on this terrible occasion. These depositions are greatly superior to those of the other witnesses, this being due, I should say, to the fact that these monks had no fear when speaking before a court of justice, whereas all the other witnesses had been more or less the accomplices of their master.)

Fra Antonio di Pavia, a Capuchin, gave evidence as follows:

"After mass, at which she devoutly received the Holy Communion, and while we were giving her comfort, the Conte d'Aliffe, brother of the Lady Duchess, entered the room with a cord and a hazel rod of the thickness of my thumb, and about half an ell in length. He bandaged the Duchess's eyes with a handkerchief, which she, with great coolness, pulled lower down over her eyes, so that she should not see. The Conte put the cord round her throat; but, as it did not run well, removed it and drew back a few feet; the Duchess hearing his step pulled the handkerchief from her eyes, and said:

"'Well, what is happening now?'

“The Conte answered:

“‘The cord was not running well, I am going to fetch another, so that you shall not suffer.’

“So saying, he left the room; shortly afterwards he returned with another cord, arranged the handkerchief once more over her eyes, placed the cord round her throat, and, passing the rod through the loop, twisted it and so strangled her. The whole affair, on the Duchess’s part, was conducted in the tone of an ordinary conversation.”

Fra Antonio di Salazar, another Capuchin, concludes his evidence with these words:

“I wished to retire from the pavilion, from a scruple of conscience, so as not to see her die, but the Duchess said to me:

“‘Do not go away from here, for the love of God.’”

(Here the friar relates the incidents of her death, exactly as we have reported them.) He adds:

“She died like a good Christian, frequently repeating: ‘Credo, credo.’”

The two friars, who apparently had obtained the necessary authority from their superiors, repeat in their depositions that the Duchess always insisted upon her complete innocence, in all her conversations with them, in all her confessions, and particularly in that preceding the mass at which she received the Holy Communion. If she was guilty, by this act of vanity she cast herself into hell.

When Fra Antonio di Pavia, the Capuchin, was brought face to face with Don Leonardo del Cardine, the friar said:

“My companion said to the Count that it would be as well to wait until the Duchess had been confined;’she is in the sixth month,’ he went on, ‘we must not destroy the soul of the poor little creature she is carrying in her womb, he must have an opportunity of baptism.’

“To which the Conte d’Aliffe replied:

“‘You know that I have to go to Rome, and I do not wish to appear there with this mask on my face,’” (meaning, “with this insult unavenged.”)

Immediately the Duchess was dead, the two Capuchins insisted that her body be opened without delay, so that the rite of baptism might be administered to the child; but the Conte and Don Leonardo would not listen to their entreaties.

Next day, the Duchess was buried in the local church, with ceremony of a kind (I have read the account of it). This event, the news of which at once spread abroad, made but little impression, it had long been expected; her death had several times already been reported at Gallese and in Rome, and in any event an assassination outside the city and during a vacancy of the Holy See was nothing out of the common. The Conclave that followed the death of Paul IV was very stormy, and lasted for no less than four months.

On the 2eth of December, 1559, the unfortunate Cardinal Carafa was obliged to concur in the election of a Cardinal supported by Spain, and unable, consequently, to decline to take any of the harsh measures which Philip II would invoke against Cardinal Carafa. The new Pope took the name of Pius IV.

Had the Cardinal not been in banishment at the moment of his uncle’s death, he would have had control of the election, or at least would have been in a position to prevent the nomination of an enemy.

Soon after this, both the Cardinal and the Duke were arrested. King Philip’s order was evidently that they should be put to death. They had to reply to fourteen separate charges. Everyone who could throw any light upon these charges was examined. The report, which is extremely well drafted, consists of two folio volumes, which I have read with great interest, because one finds on every page of them details of custom which the historians have not thought worthy of the solemn garb of history. I observed among others certain extremely picturesque details of an attempt at assassination aimed by the Spanish party against Cardinal Carafa, then the all-powerful Minister.

Anyhow, he and his brother were condemned for crimes which would not have been crimes in anyone else, that for instance of having put to death the lover of an unfaithful wife and the wife herself. A few years later, Prince Orsini married the sister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany; he suspected her of infidelity and had her poisoned in Tuscany itself, with the consent of the Grand Duke her brother, and yet this was never imputed to him as a crime. Several Princesses of the House of Medici died in this way.

When the trial of the two Carafa was ended, a long summary of it was prepared, and this, on several occasions, was examined by congregations of Cardinals. It is obvious that once it had been decided to punish with death a murder committed to avenge an act of adultery, a sort of crime to which justice never paid any attention, the Cardinal was guilty of having persecuted the Duke until the crime was committed, as the Duke was guilty of having ordered its execution.

On the 3rd of March, 1564, Pope Pius IV held a Consistory which lasted for eight hours, and at the end of which he pronounced sentence on the Carafa in the following words: “Prout in schedula.”

On the night of the 4th, the Fiscal sent the Bargello to the Castel Sant’ Angelo, to carry out the sentence of death passed upon the two brothers, Carlo, Cardinal Carafa, and Giovanni, Duke of Palliano, which he did. They dealt first with the Duke. He was transferred from the Castel Sant’ Angelo to the prisons of Tordinone, where everything was in readiness; it was there that the Duke, the Conte d’Aliffe and Don Leonardo del Cardine had their heads cut off.

The Duke bore that dread moment not merely like a gentleman of exalted birth, but like a Christian ready to endure all for the love of God. He addressed a few noble words to his two companions, encouraging them in the hour of death; then wrote to his son. [Footnote: The learned Signor Sismondi confuses the whole of this story. See the article Carafa in the Biographie Michaud; he maintains that it was the Conte di Montorio who had his head cut off on the day of the Cardinal’s death. The Conte was father of the Cardinal and of the Duke of Palliano. The learned historian confuses the father with the son.]

The Bargello returned to the Castel Sant' Angelo, with an announcement of death to Cardinal Carafa, giving him no more than an hour to prepare himself. The Cardinal shewed a greater strength of character than his brother, all the more as he said less; speech is always a strength which one seeks outside oneself. He was heard only to mutter these words in a low tone, on receiving the grim tidings:

"I to die! O Pope Pius! O King Philip!"

He made his confession; repeated the seven Penitential Psalms, then sat down on a chair and said to the executioner:

"Proceed."

The executioner strangled him with a silken cord, which broke; he was obliged to make a second and a third attempt. The Cardinal looked at him without deigning to utter a word.

(Note added.)

Not many years later, the sainted Pope Pius V ordered a revision of the proceedings, which were annulled; the Cardinal and his brother had all their honours restored to them, and the Procurator General, who had done most to cause their death, was hanged. Pius V ordered the suppression of the report; all the copies existing in the libraries were burned; people were forbidden to preserve one on pain of excommunication: but the Pope forgot that he had a copy of the report in his own library, and it was from this copy that all those were made which we see today.

The Non-Fiction

Piazza della Scala, Milan. In 1814 Stendhal left for Italy, where he settled in Milan.

The restaurant named after Stendhal and located in the building where the author lived during his residence in Milan

ON LOVE

Translated by Philip Sidney Woolf and Cecil N. Sidney Woolf

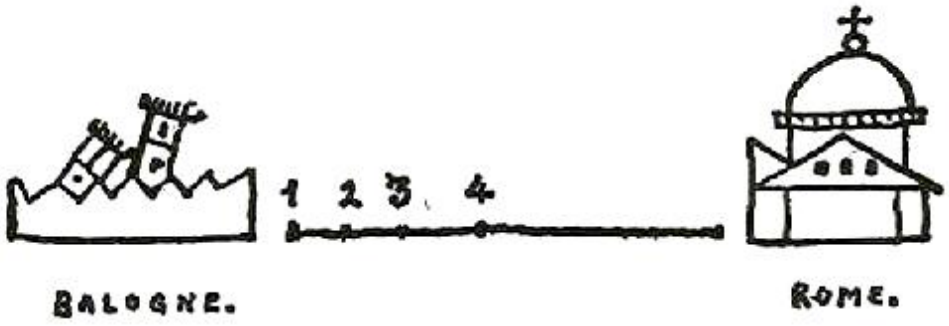
First published in 1822, De L'Amour is a unique work of literary art, which defies categorisation as a standard genre. Neither novel, nor formal essay, the book was written as a rational analysis of romantic passion, based on Stendhal's own unrequited love for Mathilde, Countess Dembowska, whom he met while living at Milan. This fusion of, and tension between, clear-headed analysis and romantic feeling is also typical of the author's famous novels; for which now he is celebrated as being a Romantic realist.

In the work Stendhal compares the "birth of love", in which the love object is 'crystallized' in the mind, as being a process similar or analogous to a trip to Rome. In the analogy, the city of Bologna represents indifference and Rome represents perfect love: Crystallization is a concept, developed by Stendhal, describing the process, or mental metamorphosis, in which unattractive characteristics of a new love are transformed into perceptual diamonds of shimmering beauty. As explained by Stendhal: "What I call 'crystallization' is the operation of the mind that draws from all that presents itself the discovery that the loved object has some new perfections."

In the summer of 1818 Stendhal had taken a recreational trip to the salt mines of Hallein near Salzburg with his friend and associate Madame Gherardi. Here they discovered the phenomenon of salt "crystallization", which they were inspired to use as a metaphor for human relationships. Along one particular trip into the 500-ft deep Salzburg mines, Stendhal and Madame Gherardi were introduced to an intelligent Bavarian officer, who joined their company and subsequently could be seen to be falling in love with Madame Gherardi. What amused Stendhal the most in the newcomer's

condition was how the officer saw perfections in the woman which were more or less invisible to Stendhal. For example, he began to praise Madame Gherardi's hand, which had been curiously marked by smallpox in her childhood and had remained very pocked and rather brown.

Stendhal reasoned, "How shall I explain what I see?" He wondered, "Where shall I find a comparison to illustrate my thought?" Just at that moment Madame Gherardi was toying with a pretty branch covered with salt crystals which the miners had given her. The sun was shining and the little salt prisms glittered like the finest diamonds in a brightly lit ballroom. From this observation Stendhal formulated his concept of mental "crystallization" and thus set forth to explain his new theory to Madame Gherardi, who was curiously unaware of the officer's infatuation.



Stendhal's depiction of "crystallization" in the process of falling in love

Matilde Viscontini Dembowski — Stendhal's first love

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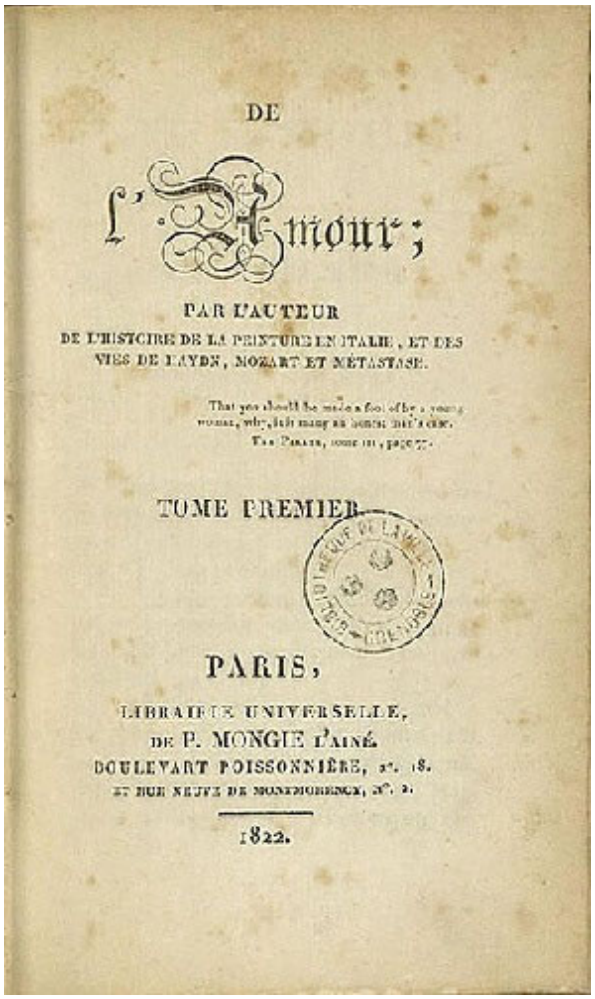

DE

L'Amour;

PAR L'AUTEUR

DE L'HISTOIRE DE LA PEINTURE EN ITALIE, ET DES VIES DE HAYDN, MOZART ET MÉTASTASE.

That you should be made a fool of by a young woman, why, that may be borne: but a child.

Les Plaids, scene III, page 77.

TOME PREMIER.

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LIBRAIRIE UNIVERSELLE,
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ET RUE NEUVE DE MONTMORENCY, n°. 2.

1822.

The title page of the first edition

TO B. K.

FOR WHOM THE TRANSLATION WAS BEGUN

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION

STENDHAL'S three prefaces to this work on Love are not an encouraging opening. Their main theme is the utter incomprehensibility of the book to all but a very select few—"a hundred readers only": they are rather warnings than introductions. Certainly, the early life of Stendhal's De l'Amour justifies this somewhat distant attitude towards the public. The first and second editions were phenomenal failures — not even a hundred readers were forthcoming. But Stendhal, writing in the early part of the nineteenth century, himself prophesied that the twentieth would find his ideas at least more comprehensible. The ideas of genius in one age are the normal spiritual food for superior intellect in the next. Stendhal is still something of a mystery to the general public; but the ideas, which he agitated, are at present regarded as some of the most important subjects for immediate enquiry by many of the keenest and most practical minds of Europe.

A glance at the headings of the chapters gives an idea of the breadth of Stendhal's treatment of love. He touches on every side of the social relationship between man and woman; and while considering the disposition of individual nations towards love, gives us a brilliant, if one-sided, general criticism of these nations, conscious throughout of the intimate connexion in any given age between its conceptions of love and the status of woman.

Stendhal's ideal of love has various names: it is generally "passion-love," but more particularly "love à Vitalienne." The thing in itself is always the same — it is the love of a man and a woman, not as husband and wife, not as mistress and lover, but as two human beings, who find the highest possible pleasure, not in passing so many hours of the day or night together, but in living one life. Still more, it is the attachment of two free fellow-creatures — not of master and slave.

Stendhal was born in 1783 — eight years before Olympe de Gouges, the French Mary Wollstonecraft, published her Déclaration des Droits des Femmes. That is to say, by the time Stendhal had reached mental maturity, Europe had for some time been acquainted with the cry for Women's Rights,

and heard the earliest statement of the demands, which have broadened out into what our age glibly calls the “Woman Question.” How, may we ask, does Stendhal’s standpoint correspond with his chronological position between the French Revolution and the “Votes for Women” campaign of the present day?

Stendhal is emphatically a champion of Women’s Rights. It is true that the freedom, which Stendhal demands, is designed for other ends than are associated to-day with women’s claims. Perhaps Stendhal, were he alive now, would cry out against what he would call a distortion of the movement he championed. Men, and still more women, must be free, Stendhal holds, in order to love; his chapters in this book on the education of women are all an earnest and brilliant plea to prove that an educated woman is not necessarily a pedant; that she is, on the contrary, far more lovable than the uneducated woman, whom our grandfathers brought up on the piano, needlework and the Catechism; in fine, that intellectual sympathy is the true basis of happiness in the relations of the two sexes. Modern exponents of Women’s Rights will say that this is true, but only half the truth. It would be more correct to say that Stendhal saw the whole truth, but forbore to follow it out to its logical conclusion with the blind intransigeance of the modern propagandist. Be that as it may, Stendhal certainly deserves more acknowledgment, as one of the pioneers in the movement, than he generally receives from its present-day supporters.

Stendhal was continually lamenting his want of ability to write. According to him, a perusal of the Code Civil, before composition, was the best way he had found of grooming his style. This may well have something to do with the opinion, handed on from one history of French literature to another, that Stendhal, like Balzac — it is usually put in these very words — had no style. It is not, correctly speaking, what the critics themselves mean: to have no style would be to chop and change from one method of expression to another, and nothing could be less truly said of either of these writers. They mean that he had a bad style, and that is certainly a matter of taste. Perhaps the critics, while condemning, condemn themselves. It is the severe beauty of the Code Civil which makes them uncomfortable. An eye for an eye and a spade for a spade is Stendhal’s way. He is suspicious of the slightest adornment: everything that is thought clearly can be written simply. Other writers have had as simplified a style — Montesquieu or Voltaire, for

example — but there is scant merit in telling simply a simple lie, and Voltaire, as Stendhal himself says, was afraid of things which are difficult to put into words. This kind of daintiness is not Stendhal's simplicity: he is merely uncompromising and blunt. True, his bluntness is excessive. A nice balance between the severity of the Code Civil and the "drums and tramplings" of Elizabethan English comes as naturally to an indifferent pen, whipped into a state of false enthusiasm, as it is foreign to the warmth of genuine conviction. Had Stendhal been a little less vehement and a little less hard-headed, there might have been fewer modifications, a few less repetitions, contradictions, ellipses — but then so much the less Stendhal. In that case he might have trusted himself: as it was he knew his own tendency too well and took fright. Sometimes in reading Carlyle, one wishes that he had felt the same kind of modesty: he, certainly, could never have kept to the thin centre line, and we should have had another great writer "without a style." Effect meant little to Stendhal, hard fact and clearness everything. Perhaps, he would often have made his meaning clearer, if he had been less suspicious of studied effect and elaborate writing. Not infrequently he succeeds in being colloquial and matter-of-fact, without being definite.

Stendhal was beset with a horror of being artistic. Was it not he who said of an artist, whose dress was particularly elaborate: "Depend upon it, a man who adorns his person will also adorn his work"? Stendhal was a soldier first, then a writer — Salviati is a soldier. Certainly it is his contempt for the type of person — even commoner, perhaps, in 1914 than in 1814 — who carries his emotions on his sleeve, which accounts for Stendhal's naïve disclaimer of personal responsibility, the invention of Lisio and Salviati, mythical authors of this work on love — all a thin screen to hide his own obsession, which manages, none the less, to break through unmasked on almost every page.

The translation makes no attempt to hide these peculiarities or even to make too definite a sense from a necessarily doubtful passage. Its whole aim is to reproduce Stendhal's essay in English, just as it stands in French. No other English translation of the whole work exists: only a selection of its maxims translated piecemeal. Had a translation existed, we should certainly not have undertaken another. As it is, we have relied upon a great sympathy with the author, and a studied adhesion to what he said, in order to reconstruct this essay — encouraged by the conviction that the one is as necessary as the

other in order to obtain a satisfactory result. Charles Cotton's Montaigne seems to us the pattern of all good translations.

In spite of the four prefaces of the original, we felt it advisable to add still another to the English translation. Stendhal said that no book stood in greater need of a word of introduction. That was in Paris — here it is a foreigner, dressed up, we trust, quite à l'anglaise, but still, perhaps, a little awkward, and certainly in need of something more than the chilly announcement of the title page — about as encouraging as the voice of the flunkey, who bawls out your name at a party over the heads of the crowd already assembled. True, the old English treatment of foreigners has sadly degenerated: more bows than brickbats are their portion, now London knows the charm of cabarets, revues and cheap French cooking.

The work in itself is conspicuous, if not unique. Books on Love are legion: how could it be otherwise? It was probably the first topic of conversation, and none has since been found more interesting. But Stendhal has devised a new treatment of the subject. His method is analytical and scientific, but, at the same time, there is no attempt at bringing the subject into line with a science; it is no part of erotology — there is no

Greek ending with a little passing bell

That signifies some faith about to die.

His faith is unimpeachable and his curiosity and honesty unbounded: this is what makes him conspicuous. In claiming to be scientific, Stendhal meant nothing more than that his essay was based purely upon unbiassed observation; that he accepted nothing upon vague hearsay or from tradition; that even the finer shades of sentiment could be observed with as much disinterested precision, if not made to yield as definite results, as any other natural phenomena, "The man who has known love finds all else unsatisfying" — is, properly speaking, a scientific fact.

Analytical, however, is the best word to characterise the Stendhalian method. Scientific suggests, perhaps, more naturally the broader treatment of love, which is familiar in Greek literature, lives all through the Middle Ages, is typified in Dante, and survives later in a host of Renaissance dialogues and treatises on Love. This love — see it in the Symposium of Plato, in Dante or in the Dialoghi of Leone Ebreo — is more than a human passion, it is also the amor che muove il sole e le altre stelle, the force of attraction which, combined with hate, the force of repulsion, is the cause of universal movement. In this way love is not only scientifically treated, it embraces all other sciences within it. Scientists will smile, but the day of Science and Art with a contemptuous smile for each other is over. True, the feeling underlying this cosmic treatment of love is very human, very simple — a conviction that love, as a human passion, is all-important, and a desire to justify its importance by finding it a place in a larger order of things, in the "mystical mathematics of the kingdom of Heaven." Weaker heads than Plato are also pleased to call love divine, without knowing very clearly what they mean by divinity. Their ignorance is relative; the allegorical representation of Eros — damned and deified alternately by the poets — is in motive, perhaps, not so far from what we have called the scientific, but, perhaps, might better have named the cosmic, treatment.

In a rough classification of books on Love one can imagine a large number collected under the heading—" Academic." One looks for something to express that want of plain dealing, of terre-à-terre frankness, which is so deplorable in the literature of Love, and is yet the distinctive mark of so much of it. "Academic" comprehends a wide range of works all based on a more or less set or conventional theory of the passions. It includes the average modern novel, in which convention is supreme and experience negligible — just a traditional, lifeless affair, in which there is not even a pretence of curiosity or love of truth. And, at the same time, "academic" is the label for the kind of book in which convention is rather on the surface, rather in the form than in the matter. Tullia of Aragon, for example, was no tyro in the theory and practice of love, but her Dialogo d Amore is still distinctly academic. Of course it is easy to be misled by a stiff varnish of old-fashioned phrase; the reader in search of sincerity will look for it in the thought expressed, not in the manner of expression. There is more to be learnt about love from Werther, with all his wordy sorrows, than from the slick tongue of Yorick, who found it a singular blessing of his life "to be

almost every hour of it miserably in love with someone." But, then, just because Werther is wordy, all his feelings come out, expressed one way or another. With Tullia, and others like her, one feels that so much is suppressed, because it did not fit the conventional frame. What she says she felt, but she must have felt so much more or have known that others felt more.

This suppression of truth has, of course, nothing to do with the partial treatment of love necessary often in purely imaginative literature. No one goes to poetry for an anatomy of love. Not love, but people in love, are the business of a playwright or a novelist. The difference is very great. The purely imaginative writer is dealing with situations first, and then with the passions that cause them.

Here it is interesting to observe that Stendhal, in gathering his evidence, makes use of works of imagination as often as works based upon fact or his own actual experience. Characters from Scott are called in as witnesses, side by side with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse or Mariana Alcaforado.

The books mentioned by Stendhal are of two distinct kinds. There are those, from which he draws evidence and support for his own theories, and in which the connexion with love is only incidental (Shakespeare's Plays, for example, Don Juan or the Nouvelle Héloïse), and others whose authors are really his forerunners, such as André le Chapelain. Stendhal gives some account of this curious writer, who perhaps comes nearer his own analytical method than any later writer. In fact, we have called Stendhal unique perhaps too rashly — there are others he does not mention, who, in a less sustained and intentional way, have attempted an analytical, and still imaginative, study of love. Stendhal makes no mention of a short essay on Love by Pascal, which certainly falls in the same category as his own. It is less illuminating than one might expect, but to read it is to appreciate still more the restraint, which Stendhal has consciously forced upon himself. Others also since Stendhal — Baudelaire, for instance — have made casual and valuable investigations in the Stendhalian method. Baudelaire has here and there a maxim which, in brilliance and exactitude, equals almost anything in this volume.

And then — though this is no place for a bibliography of love — there is Hazlitt's Liber Amoris. Stendhal would have loved that patient, impartial chronicle of love's ravages: instead of Parisian salons and Duchesses it is all servant-girls and Bloomsbury lodging-houses; but the Liber Amoris is no less pitiful and, if possible, more real than the diary of Salviati.

There are certain books which, for the frequency of their mention in this work, demand especial attention of the reader — they are its commentary and furnish much of the material for its ideas.

In number CLXV of "Scattered Fragments" (below,) Stendhal gives the list as follows: —

The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini.

The novels of Cervantes and Scarron.

Manon Lescaut and Le Doyen de Killerine, by the Abbé Prévôt.

The Latin Letters of Héloïse to Abelard.

Tom Jones.

Letters of a Portuguese Nun.

Two or three stories by Auguste La Fontaine.

Pignotti's History of Tuscany.

Werther.

Brantôme.

Memoirs of Carlo Gozzi (Venice, 1760) — only the eighty pages on the history of his love affairs.

“The Memoirs of Lauzun, Saint-Simon, d’Épinay, de Staël, Marmontel, Bezenval, Roland, Duclos, Horace Walpole, Evelyn, Hutchinson.

Letters of Mademoiselle Lespinasse.

All these are more or less famous works, with which, at least by name, the general reader is familiar. Brantôme’s witty and entertaining writings, the Letters of a Portuguese Nun and those of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, perhaps the sublimest letters that have ever been written, are far less read than they deserve. The rest — excepting perhaps Scarron, Carlo Gozzi, Auguste La Fontaine, and one or two of the less-known Memoirs — are the common reading of a very large public.

This list of books is mentioned as the select library of Lisio Visconti, who “was anything but a great reader.” Lisio Visconti is one of the many imaginary figures, behind which hides Stendhal himself; we have already suggested one reason for this curious trait. Besides Lisio Visconti and Salviati, we meet Del Rosso, Scotti, Delfante, Pignatelli, Zilietti, Baron de Bottmer, etc etc. Often these phantom people are mentioned side by side with a character from a book or a play or with someone Stendhal had actually met in life. General Teulié is a real person — Stendhal’s superior officer on his first expedition in Italy: Schiassetti is a fiction. In the same way the dates, which the reader will often find appended to a story or a note, sometimes give the date of a real event in Stendhal’s life, while at other times it can be proved that, at the particular time given, the event mentioned could not have taken place. This falsification of names and dates was a mania with Stendhal. To most of his friends he gave a name completely different from their real one, and adopted with each of them a special pseudonym for himself. The list of Stendhal’s pseudonyms is extensive and amusing. But he was not always thorough in his system of disguise: he is even known to have written from Italy a letter in cypher, enclosing at the same time the key to the cypher!

We have only to make a few additions to Lisio Visconti’s list of books already mentioned, in order to have a pretty fair account of the main sources of reference and suggestion, to which Stendhal turned in writing his De

l'Amour. There are Rousseau's Nouvelle Héloïse and Emile. Stendhal holds that, except for very green youth, the Nouvelle Héloïse is unreadable. Yet in spite of its affectation, it remained for him one of the most important works for the study of genuine passion. Then we must add the Liaisons Dangereuses — a work which bears certain resemblances to Stendhal's De l'Amour. Both are the work of a soldier and both have a soldierly directness; for perfect balance and strength of construction few books have come near the Liaisons Dangereuses — none have ever surpassed it. There is the Princesse de Clèves of Madame de Lafayette and Corinne by Madame de Staël, whose typically German and extravagant admiration for Italy touched a weak spot in Stendhal. After Chateaubriand's Génie du Christianisme, which Stendhal also refers to more than once, the works of Madame de Staël were, perhaps, the greatest working influence in the rise of Romanticism. What wonder, then, that Stendhal was interested? To the letters of Mlle, de Lespinasse and of the Portuguese Nun we must add the letters of Mirabeau, written during his imprisonment at Vincennes, to Sophie de Monnier. Further, we must add the writings of certain moral teachers whose names occur frequently in the following pages: Helvétius, whom Clarétie amusingly calls the enfant terrible of the philosophers; de Tracy; Volney, author of the once celebrated Ruines, traveller and philosopher. These names are only the most important. Stendhal's reading was extensive, and we might swell the list with the names of Montesquieu, Condillac, Condorcet, Chamfort, Diderot — to name only the moralists.

It is noticeable that almost all these books, mentioned as the favourite authorities of Stendhal, are eighteenth-century works. The fact will seem suspicious to those inclined to believe that the eighteenth century was a time of pretty ways and gallantry à la Watteau, or of windy mouthings about Cause and Effect, Duties and Principles, Reason and Nature. But, to begin with, neither estimate comes near the mark; and, moreover, Stendhal hated Voltaire almost as much as Blake did. It was not an indiscriminate cry of Rights and Liberty which interested Stendhal in the eighteenth century. The old régime was, of course, politically uncongenial to him, the liberal and Bonapartist, and he could see the stupidity and injustice and hollowness of a society built up on privilege. But even if Stendhal, like the happy optimist of to-day, had mistaken the hatred of past wrongs for a proof of present well-being, how could a student of Love fail to be fascinated by an age such as that of Lewis XV? It was the leisure for loving, which, as he was always

remarking, court-life and only court-life makes possible, that reconciled him to an age he really despised. Moreover, the mass of memoirs and letters of the distinguished men and women of the eighteenth century, offering as it does material for the study of manners unparalleled in any other age, inevitably led him back to the court-life of the ancien régime. Besides, as has been already suggested, the contradiction in Stendhal was strong. In spite of his liberalism, he was pleased in later life to add the aristocratic "de" to the name of Beyle. With Lord Byron, divided in heart between the generous love of liberty which led him to fight for the freedom of Greece, and disgust at the vulgarity of the Radical party, which he had left behind in England, Stendhal found himself closely in sympathy when they met in Italy. It was the originality of the men of the sixteenth century which called forth his genuine praises; even the statesmen - courtiers and soldiers of the heroic age of Lewis XIV awoke his admiration; the gallant courtiers and incompetent statesmen of Lewis XV awoke at least his interest.

Stendhal's De l'Amour, and in less degree his novels, have had to struggle for recognition, and the cause has largely been the peculiarity of his attitude — his scepticism, the exaggerated severity of his treatment of idyllic subjects, together with an unusual complement of sentiment and appreciation of the value of sentiment for the understanding of life. It is his manner of thinking, much rather than the strangeness of his thoughts themselves, which made the world hesitate to give Stendhal the position which it now accords him. But at least one great discovery the world did find in De l'Amour — a novelty quite apart from general characteristics, apart from its strange abruptness and stranger truth of detail. Stendhal's discovery is "Crystallisation it is the central idea of his book. The word was his invention, though the thought, which it expresses so decisively, is to be found, like most so-called advanced ideas, hidden away in a corner of Montaigne's Essays. Crystallisation is the process by which we love an object for qualities, which primarily exist in our fancy and which we lend to it, that is to say, imaginary or unreal qualities. While Montaigne, and others no doubt, had seen in this a peculiarity of love, Stendhal saw in it love's essential characteristic — one might say, its explanation, if love were capable of being explained. Besides, in this book Stendhal is seeking the how not the why of love. And he goes beyond love: he recognises the influence of crystallisation upon other sides of life besides love.

Crystallisation has become an integral part of the world's equipment for thought and expression.

The crisis in Stendhal's posthumous history is Sainte-Beuve's Causeries des Lundis of January 2nd and 9th, 1854, which Stendhal was the subject. Stendhal died in 1842. It is sometimes said that his reputation is a fictitious reputation, intentionally worked up by partisanship and without regard to merit, that in his lifetime he was poorly thought of. This is untrue. His artistic activities, like his military, were appreciated by those competent to judge them. He was complimented by Napoleon on his services prior to the retreat from Moscow; Balzac, who of all men was capable of judging a novel and, still more, a direct analysis of a passion, was one of his admirers, and particularly an admirer of De l'Amour. From the general public he met to a great extent with mistrust, and for a few years after his death his memory was honoured with apathetic silence. The few, a chosen public and some faithful friends — Mérimée and others — still cherished his reputation. In 1853, owing in great measure to the efforts of Romain Colomb and Louis Crozet, a complete edition of his works was published by Michel-Lévy. And then, very appropriately, early in the next year was heard the impressive judgment of Sainte-Beuve. Perhaps the justest remark in that just appreciation is where he gives Stendhal the merit of being one of the first Frenchmen to travel littérairement parlant. Stendhal came back from each of his many and frequent voyages, like the happy traveller in Joachim du Bellay's sonnet, plein d'usage et raison — knowing the ways of men and full of ripe wisdom. And this is true not only of his travels over land and sea, but also of those into the thoughtful world of books.

An equally true — perhaps still truer — note was struck by Sainte-Beuve, when he insisted on the important place in Stendhal's character played by la peur d'etre dupe — the fear of being duped. Stendhal was always and in all situations beset by this fear; it tainted his happiest moments and his best qualities. We have already remarked on the effect on his style of his mistrust of himself — it is the same characteristic. A sentimental romantic by nature, he was always on his guard against the follies of a sentimental outlook; a sceptic by education and the effect of his age, he was afraid of being the dupe of his doubts; he was sceptical of scepticism itself. This tended to make him unreal and affected, made him often defeat his own ends in the oddest way. In order to avoid the possibility of being carried away too far along a

course, in which instinct led him, he would choose a direction approved instead by his intellect, only to find out too late that he was cutting therein a sorry figure. Remember, as a boy he made his entrance into the world “with the fixed intention of being a seducer of women,” and that, late in life, he made the melancholy confession that his normal rôle was that of the lover crossed in love. Here lies the commentary on not a little in Stendhal’s life and works.

The facts of his life can be told very briefly.

Henry Beyle, who wrote under the name of Stendhal, was born at Grenoble in 1783, and was educated in his native town. In 1799 he came to Paris and was placed there under the protection of Daru, an important officer under Napoleon, a relative and patron of his family. But he showed no fitness for the various kinds of office work to which he was put. He tried his hand at this time, unsuccessfully also, at painting.

In 1800, still under the protection of Daru, he went to Italy, and, having obtained a commission in the 6th regiment of Dragoons, had his first experience of active service. By 1802 he had distinguished himself as a soldier, and it was to the general surprise of all who knew him, that he returned to France on leave, handed in his papers and returned to Grenoble.

He soon returned to Paris, there to begin serious study. But in 1806, he was once more with Daru and the army, — present at the triumphal entry of Napoleon into Berlin. It was directly after this that he was sent to Brunswick as assistant commissaire des guerres.

He left Brunswick in 1809, but after a flying visit to Paris, he was again given official employment in Germany. He was with the army at Vienna. After the peace of Schoenbrunn he returned once more to Paris in 1810.

In 1812, he saw service once more — taking an active and distinguished part in the Russian campaign of that year. He was complimented by Napoleon on the way he had discharged his duties in the commissariat. He witnessed the burning of Moscow and shared in the horrors and hardships of the retreat.

In 1813 his duties brought him to Segan in Silesia, and in 1814 to his native town of Grenoble.

The fall of Napoleon in the same year deprived him of his position and prospects. He went to Milan and stayed there with little interruption till 1821; only leaving after these, the happiest, years of his life, through fear of being implicated in the Carbonari troubles.

In 1830, he was appointed to the consulate of Trieste; but Metternich, who, no doubt, mistrusted his liberal tendencies, refused to ratify his appointment, and he was transferred to Civita Vecchia. This unhealthy district tried his health, and frequent travel did not succeed in repairing it.

In 1841, he was on leave in Paris, where he died suddenly in the following year.

Stendhal's best-known books are his two novels: La Chartreuse de Parme and Le Rouge et le Noir. Besides these there are his works of travel — Promenades dans Rome and Rome, Florence et Naples; Mémoire d'un Touriste; his history of Italian painting; his lives of Haydn, Mozart and Rossini; l'Abbesse de Castro and other minor works of fiction; finally a number of autobiographical works, of which La Vie de Henri Brulard, begun in his fiftieth year and left incomplete, is the most important.

But De l'Amour, Stendhal himself considered his most important work; it was written, as he tells us, in his happy years in Lombardy. It was published on his return to Paris in 1822, but it had no success, and copies of this edition are very rare. Recently it has been reprinted by Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons (in Chef d'Œuvres de la Littérature Française, London and Paris, 1912). The second edition (1833) had no more success than the first and is equally difficult to find. Stendhal was preparing a third edition for the press when he died in 1842. In 1853 the work made a new appearance in the edition of Stendhal's works published by Michel-Lévy, since reprinted by Calmann-Lévy. It contains certain additions, some of which Stendhal probably intended for the new edition, which he was planning at the time of his death.

Within the last year have appeared the first volumes of a new French edition of Stendhal's works, published by Messrs. Honoré and Edouard Champion of Paris.

It will be the most complete edition of Stendhal's works yet published and is the surest evidence that Stendhal's position in French literature is now assured. The volume containing De l'Amour has not yet appeared.

The basis of this translation is the first edition, to which we have only added three prefaces, written by Stendhal at various, subsequent dates and all well worth perusal. Apart from these, we have preferred to leave the book just as it appeared in the two editions, which were published in Stendhal's own lifetime.

We may, perhaps, add a word with regard to our notes at the end of the book. We make no claim that they are exhaustive: we intended only to select some few points for explanation or illustration, with the English reader in view. Here and there in this book are sentences and allusions which we can no more explain than could Stendhal himself, when in 1822 he was correcting the proof-sheets: as he did, we have left them, preferring to believe with him that "the fault lay with the self who was reading, not with the self who had written." But, these few enigmas aside — and they are very few — to make an exhaustive collection of notes on this book would be to write another volume — one of those volumes of "Notes and Appendices," under which scholars bury a Pindar or Catullus. That labour we will gladly leave to others — to be accomplished, we hope, a thousand years hence, when French also is a "dead" language.

In conclusion we should like to express our thanks to our friend Mr. W. H. Morant, of the India Office, who has helped us to see the translation through the Press.

P. and C. N. S. W.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IT is in vain that an author solicits the indulgence of his public — the printed page is there to give the lie to his pretended modesty. He would do better to trust to the justice, patience and impartiality of his readers, and it is to this last quality especially that the author of the present work makes his appeal. He has often heard people in France speak of writings, opinions or sentiments as being “truly French”; and so he may well be afraid that, by presenting facts truly as they are, and showing respect only for sentiments and opinions that are universally true, he may have provoked that jealous exclusiveness, which, in spite of its very doubtful character, we have seen of late set up as a virtue. What, I wonder, would become of history, of ethics, of science itself or of literature, if they had to be truly German, truly Russian or Italian, truly Spanish or English, as soon as they had crossed the Rhine, the Alps or the Channel? What are we to say to this kind of justice, to this ambulatory truth? When we see such expressions as “devotion truly Spanish,”

“virtues truly English,” seriously employed in the speeches of patriotic foreigners, it is high time to suspect this sentiment, which expresses itself in very similar terms also elsewhere. At Constantinople or among savages, this blind and exclusive partiality for one’s own country is a rabid thirst for blood; among civilised peoples, it is a morbid, unhappy, restless vanity, that is ready to turn on you for a pinprick.

[To the first edition, 1822. — TR.]

FIRST ATTEMPT AT A PREFACE.

THIS work has had no success: it has been found unintelligible — not without reason. Therefore in this new edition the author's primary intention has been to render his ideas with clearness. He has related how they came to him, and he has made a preface and an introduction — all in order to be clear. Yet, in spite of so much care, out of a hundred who have read Corinne, there are not four readers who will understand this volume.

Although it deals with Love, this little book is no novel, and still less is it diverting like a novel. 'Tis simply and solely an exact scientific description of a kind of madness which is very rarely to be found in France. The Empire of propriety, growing day by day wider, under the influence of our fear of ridicule much more than through the purity of our morals, has made of the word, which serves as title to this work, an expression, of which outspoken mention is avoided and which at times seems even to give offence. I have been forced to make use of it, but the scientific austerity of the language shelters me, I think, in this respect, from all reproach.

The form I have adopted may be reproached with egoism. A traveller is allowed to say: "I was at New York, thence I embarked for South America, I made my way back as far as Santa-Fé-de-Bogota. The gnats and mosquitoes made my life a misery during the journey, and for three days I couldn't use my right eye."

The traveller is not accused of loving to talk of himself: all his me's and my's are forgiven; for that is the clearest and most interesting manner of telling what he has seen.

It is in order, if possible, to be clear and picturesque, that the author of the present voyage into the little-known regions of the human heart says: "I went

with Mme. Gherardi to the salt mines of Hallein.... Princess Crescenzi said to me at Rome.... One day at Berlin I saw handsome Capt. L....” All these little things really happened to the author, who passed fifteen years in Germany and Italy. But more observant than sensitive, he never encountered the least adventure himself, never experienced a single personal sentiment worthy of narration. Even supposing that he had the pride to believe the contrary, a still greater pride would have prevented him from publishing his heart and selling it on the market for six francs, like those people who in their lifetime publish their memoirs.

Correcting in 1822 the proofs of this kind of moral voyage in Italy and Germany, the author, who had described the objects the day that he had seen them, treated the manuscript, containing the detailed description of all the phases of this malady of the soul called Love, with that blind respect, shown by a scholar of the fourteenth century for a newly unearthed manuscript of Lactantius or Quintius Curtius. When the author met some obscure passage (and often, to say the truth, that happened), he always believed that the fault lay with the self who was reading, not with the self who had written. He confesses that his respect for the early manuscript carried him so far as to print several passages, which he did not understand himself. Nothing more foolish for anyone who had thought of the good graces of the public; but the author, seeing Paris again after long travels, came to the conclusion that without grovelling before the Press a success was not to be had. Well, let him who brings himself to grovel keep that for the minister in power! A so-called success being out of the question, the author was pleased to publish his thoughts exactly as they had come to him. This was once upon a time the procedure of those philosophers of Greece, whose practical wisdom filled him with rapturous admiration.

It requires years to gain admittance to the inner circle of Italian society. Perhaps I shall have been the last traveller in that country. For since the Carbonari and the Austrian invasion, no foreigner will ever be received as a friend in the salons, where such reckless gaiety reigned. The traveller will see the monuments, streets and public places of a city, never the society — he will always be held in fear: the inhabitants will suspect that he is a spy, or fear that he is laughing at the battle of Antrodoco and at the degradations, which, in that land, are the one and only safeguard against the persecution of the eight or ten ministers or favourites who surround the Prince. Personally, I

really loved the inhabitants and could see the truth. Sometimes for ten months together I never spoke a word of French, and but for political troubles and the Carbonari I would never have returned to France. Good-nature is what I prize above all things.

In spite of great care to be clear and lucid, I cannot perform miracles: I cannot give ears to the deaf nor eyes to the blind. So the people of great fortunes and gross pleasures, who have made a hundred thousand francs in the year preceding the moment they open this book, had better quickly shut it, especially if they are bankers, manufacturers, respectable industrial folk — that's to say, people with eminently positive ideas. This book would be less unintelligible to anyone who had made a large sum of money on the Stock Exchange or in a lottery. Such winnings may be found side by side with the habit of passing hours together in day-dreams, in the enjoyment of the emotion evoked by a picture of Prud'hon, a phrase of Mozart, still more, a certain peculiar look of a woman who is often in your thoughts. 'Tis not in this way that these people "waste their time," who pay ten thousand workmen at the end of each week: their minds work always towards the useful and the positive. The dreamer, of whom I speak, is the man they would hate, if they had time; 'tis him they like to make the butt of their harmless jokes. The industrial millionaire feels confusedly that such a man has more estime for a thought than for a bag of money.

I invite the studious young man to withdraw, if in the same year as the industrial gained a hundred thousand francs, he has acquired the knowledge of modern Greek, and is so proud of it that already he aspires to Arabic. I beg not to open this book every man, who has not been unhappy for imaginary reasons, reasons to which vanity is stranger, and which he would be very ashamed to see divulged in the salons.

I am sure to displease those women who capture the consideration of these very salons by an affectation that never lapses for an instant. Some of these for a moment I have surprised in good earnest, and so astonished, that, asking themselves the question, they could no longer tell whether such and such a sentiment, as they had just expressed, was natural or affected. How could such women judge of the portraiture of real feelings? In fact this work has been their bête noire: they say that the author must be a wretch.

To blush suddenly at the thought of certain youthful doings; to have committed follies through sensibility and to suffer for them, not because you cut a silly figure in the eyes of the salon, but in the eyes of a certain person in the salon; to be in love at the age of twenty-six in good earnest with a woman who loves another, or even (but the case is so rare that I scarcely dare write it, for fear of sinking again into the unintelligible, as in the first edition) — or even to enter the salon where the woman is whom you fancy that you love, and to think only of reading in her eyes her opinion of you at the moment, without any idea of putting on a love-lorn expression yourself — these are the antecedents I shall ask of my reader. The description of many of these rare and subtle feelings has appeared obscure to people with positive ideas. How manage to be clear in their eyes? Tell them of a rise of fifty centimes or a change in the tariff of Columbia.

The book before you explains simply and mathematically, so to speak, the curious feelings which succeed each other and form a whole called the Passion of Love.

Imagine a fairly complicated geometrical figure, drawn with white chalk on a large blackboard. Well, I am going to explain that geometrical figure, but on one condition — that it exists already on the blackboard, for I personally cannot draw it. It is this impossibility that makes it so difficult to write on Love a book which is not a novel. In order to follow with interest a philosophic examination of this feeling, something is wanted in the reader besides understanding: it is absolutely necessary that Love has been seen by him. But then where can a passion be seen?

This is a cause of obscurity that I shall never be able to eliminate.

Love resembles what we call the Milky Way in heaven, a gleaming mass formed by thousands of little stars, each of which may be a nebula. Books have noted four or five hundred of the little feelings hanging together and so hard to recognise, which compose this passion. But even in these, the least refined, they have often blundered and taken the accessory for the principal. The best of these books, such as the Nouvelle Héloïse, the novels of Madame Cottin, the Letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse and Manon Lescaut, have been written in France, where the plant called Love is always

in fear of ridicule, is overgrown by the demands of vanity, the national passion, and reaches its full height scarcely ever.

What is a knowledge of Love got from novels? After seeing it described — without ever feeling it — in hundreds of celebrated volumes, what is to be said of seeking in mine the explanation of this madness? I answer like an echo: "'Tis madness."

Poor disillusioned young lady, would you enjoy again that which busied you so some years ago, which you dared mention to no one, which almost cost you your honour? It is for you that I have refashioned this book and tried to make it clearer. After reading it, never speak of it without a little scornful turn, and throw it in your citron bookcase behind the other books — I should even leave a few pages uncut.

'Tis not only a few pages that will be left uncut by the imperfect creature, who thinks himself philosopher, because he has remained always stranger to those reckless emotions, which cause all our happiness of a week to depend upon a glance. Some people, coming to the age of discretion, use the whole force of their vanity to forget that there was a day when they were able to stoop so low as to court a woman and expose themselves to the humiliation of a refusal: this book will win their hatred. Among the many clever people, whom I have seen condemn this work, for different reasons but all angrily, those only seemed to me ridiculous, who had the twofold conceit to pretend always to have been above the weakness of sensibility, and yet to possess enough penetration to judge a priori of the degree of exactitude of a philosophic treatise, which is nothing but an ordered description of these weaknesses.

The grave persons, who enjoy in society their reputation as safe men with no romantic nonsense, are far nearer to the understanding of a novel, however impassioned, than of a book of philosophy, wherein the author describes coldly the various stages of the malady of the soul called Love. The novel moves them a little; but before the philosophic treatise these sensible people are like blind men, who getting a description of the pictures in a museum read out to them, would say to the author: "You must agree, sir, that your work is horribly obscure." What is to happen if these blind men chance to be wits, established long since in possession of that title and with sovereign

claims to clairvoyance? The poor author will be treated prettily. In fact, it is what happened to him at the time of the first edition. Several copies were actually burnt through the raging vanity of very clever people. I do not speak of insults all the more flattering for their fury: the author was proclaimed to be coarse, immoral, a writer for the people, a suspicious character, etc. In countries outworn by monarchy, these titles are the surest reward for whoever thinks good to write on morals and does not dedicate his book to the Mme. Dubarry of the day. Blessed literature, if it were not in fashion, and interested those alone for whom it was written!

In the time of the Cid, Corneille was nothing for M. le Marquis de Danjeau but “a good fellow.” Today the whole world thinks itself made to read M. de Lamartine: so much the better for his publisher, but so much the worse, and a hundred times the worse, for that great poet. In our days genius offers accommodation to people to whom, under penalty of losing caste, it should never so much as give a thought.

The laborious and active, very estimable and very positive life of a counsellor of State, of a manufacturer of cotton goods or of a banker with a keen eye for loans finds its reward in millions, not in tender sensation. Little by little the heart of these gentlemen ossifies: the positive and the useful are for them everything, and their soul is closed to that feeling, which of all others has the greatest need of our leisure and makes us most unfit for any rational and steady occupation.

The only object of this preface is to proclaim that this book has the misfortune of being incomprehensible to all who have not found time to play the fool. Many people will feel offended and I trust they will go no further.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1834.

I WRITE for a hundred readers only and of these unhappy charming beings, without hypocrisy or moral cant, whom I would please, I know scarcely a couple. Of such as lie to gain consideration as writers, I take little heed. Certain fine ladies should keep to the accounts of their cook and the fashionable preacher of the day, be it Massillon or Mme. Necker, to be able to talk on these topics with the women of importance who mete out consideration. And to be sure, in France this noble distinction is always to be won by turning high priest of any fad.

To anyone who would read this book I would say: In all your life have you been unhappy six months for love?

Or, was your soul ever touched by sorrow not connected with the thought of a lawsuit, with failure at the last election, or with having cut a less brilliant figure than usual last season at Aix? I will continue my indiscretions and ask if in the year you have read any of those impudent works, which compel the reader to think? For example, Emile of J. J. Rousseau, or the six volumes of Montaigne? If, I should say, you have never suffered through this infirmity of noble minds, if you have not, in defiance of nature, the habit of thinking as you read, this book will give you a grudge against its author: for it will make you suspect that there exists a certain happiness, unknown to you and known to Mlle, de Lespinasse.

[May, 1834. — TR.]

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1842.

I COME to beg indulgence of the reader for the peculiar form of this Physiology of Love. It is twenty-eight years (in 1842) since the turmoil, which followed the fall of Napoleon, deprived me of my position. Two years earlier chance threw me, immediately after the horrors of the retreat from Russia, into the midst of a charming town, where I had the enchanting prospect of passing the rest of my days. In happy Lombardy, at Milan, at Venice, the great, or rather only, business of life is pleasure. No attention, there, to the deeds and movements of your neighbour; hardly a troubled thought for what is to happen to you. If a man notice the existence of his neighbour, it does not enter his head to hate him. Take away from the occupations of a French provincial town jealousy — and what is left? The absence, the impossibility of that cruel jealousy forms the surest part of that happiness, which draws all the provincials to Paris.

Following the masked balls of Carnival, which in 1820 was more brilliant than usual, the noise of five or six completely reckless proceedings occupied the society of Milan an entire month; although they are used over there to things which in France would pass for incredible. The fear of ridicule would in this country paralyse such fantastic actions: only to speak of them I need great courage.

One evening people were discussing profoundly the effects and the causes of these extravagances, at the house of the charming Mme. Pietra Grua (6), who happened, extraordinarily enough, not to be mixed up with these escapades. The thought came to me that perhaps in less than a year I should have nothing left of all those strange facts, and of the causes alleged for them, but a recollection, on which I could not depend. I got hold of a concert programme, and wrote a few words on it in pencil. A game of faro was suggested: we were thirty seated round a card-table, but the conversation was so animated that people forgot to play. Towards the close of the evening came in Col. Scotti, one of the most charming men in the Italian army: he was asked for his quantum of circumstances relative to the curious facts with which we were busy, and, indeed, his story of certain things, which chance

had confided to his knowledge, gave them an entirely new aspect. I took up my concert programme and added these new circumstances.

This collection of particulars on Love was continued in the same way, with pencil and odd scraps of paper, snatched up in the salons, where I heard the anecdotes told. Soon I looked for a common rule by which to recognise different degrees in them. Two months later fear of being taken for a Carbonaro made me return to Paris — only for a few months I hoped, but never again have I seen Milan, where I had passed seven years.

Pining with boredom at Paris, I conceived the idea of occupying myself again with the charming country from which fear had driven me. I strung together my scraps of paper and presented the book to a publisher. But soon a difficulty was raised: the printer declared that it was impossible to work from notes written in pencil and I could see that he found such copy beneath his dignity. The printer's young apprentice, who brought me back my notes, seemed quite ashamed of the more than doubtful compliment, which had been put into his mouth: he knew how to write and I dictated to him my pencil notes.

I understood, too, that discretion required me to change the proper names, and, above all, abridge the anecdotes. Although no one reads in Milan, the book, if ever it reached there, might have seemed a piece of wicked mischief.

So I brought out an ill-fated volume. I have the courage to own that I despised at that period elegance in style. I saw the young apprentice wholly taken up with avoiding sentence-endings that were unmusical and odd sounds in the arrangement of words. In return, he made throughout no scruple of changing details of fact, difficult to express: Voltaire himself is afraid of things which are difficult to tell.

The Essay on Love had no claim to merit except the number of the fine shades of feeling, which I begged the reader to verify among his memories, if he were happy enough to have any. But in all this there was something much worse: I was then, as ever, very inexperienced in the department of literature and the publisher, to whom I had presented the MS., printed it on bad paper and in an absurd format. In fact a month later, when I asked him

for news of the book—" On peut dire qu'il est sacré," he said, "For no one comes near it."

It had never even crossed my mind to solicit articles in the papers: such a thing would have seemed to me an ignominy. And yet no work was in more pressing need of recommendation to the patience of the reader. Under the menace of becoming unintelligible at the very outset, it was necessary to bring the public to accept the new word "crystallisation," suggested as a lively expression for that collection of strange fancies, which we weave round our idea of the loved one, as true and even indubitable realities.

At that time wholly absorbed in my love for the least details, which I had lately observed in the Italy of my dreams, I avoided with care every concession, every amenity of style, which might have rendered the Essay on Love less peculiarly fantastic in the eyes of men of letters.

Further, I was not flattering to the public. Literature at that time, all defaced by our great and recent misfortunes, seemed to have no other interest than the consolation of our unhappy pride: it used to rhyme "gloire" with "victoire,"

"guerriers" with "lauriers," etc. The true circumstances of the situations, which it pretends to treat, seem never to have any attraction for the tedious literature of that period: it looks for nothing but an opportunity of complimenting that people, enslaved to fashion, whom a great man had called a great nation, forgetting that they were only great on condition that their leader was himself.

As the result of my ignorance of the exigencies of the humblest success, I found no more than seventeen readers between 1822 and 1833: it is doubtful whether the Essay on Love has been understood after twenty years of existence by a hundred connoisseurs. A few have had the patience to observe the various phases of this disease in the people infected with it in their circle; for we must speak of it as a disease, in order to understand that passion which in the last thirty years our fear of ridicule has taken so much trouble to hide — it is this way which sometimes leads to its cure.

Now and now only, after half a century of revolutions, engrossing one after another our whole attention, now and now only after five complete changes in the form and the tendencies of our government, does the revolution just begin to show itself in our way of living. Love, or that which commonly appropriates Love's name and fills its place, was all-powerful in the France of Lewis XV. Colonels were created by the ladies of the court; and that court was nothing less than the fairest place in the kingdom. Fifty years after, the court is no more; and the gift of a licence to sell tobacco in the meanest provincial town is beyond the power of the most surely established ladies of the reigning bourgeoisie or of the pouting nobility.

It must be owned, women are out of fashion. In our brilliant salons the young men of twenty affect not to address them; they much prefer to stand round the noisy talker dealing, in a provincial accent, with the question of the right to vote, and to try and slip in their own little word. The rich youths, who, to keep up a show of the good-fellowship of past times, take a pride in seeming frivolous, prefer to talk horses and play high in the circles where women are excluded. The deadly indifference which seems to preside over the relations of young men and the women of five-and-twenty, for whose presence society has to thank the boredom of marriage, will bring, perhaps, a few wise spirits to accept this scrupulously exact description of the successive phases of the malady called Love.

Seeing the terrible change which has plunged us into the stagnation of to-day, and makes unintelligible to us the society of 1778, such as we find it in the letters of Diderot to Mlle. Voland, his mistress, or in the Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay, a man might ask the question, which of our successive governments has killed in us the faculty of enjoying ourselves, and drawn us nearer to the gloomiest people on the face of the earth? The only passable thing which that people have invented — parliament and the honesty of their parties — we are unable even to copy. In return, the stupidest of their gloomy conceptions, the spirit of dignity, has come among us to take the place of our French gaiety, which is to be found now only in the five hundred balls in the outskirts of Paris or in the south of France, beyond Bordeaux,

But which of our successive governments has cost us the fearful misfortune of anglicisation? Must we accuse that energetic government of 1793, which

prevented the foreigners from coming to pitch their camp in Montmartre — that government which in a few years will seem heroic in our eyes and forms a worthy prelude to that, which under Napoleon, went forth to carry our name into all the capitals of Europe?

We shall pass over the well-meaning stupidity of the Directoire, illustrated by the talents of Carnot and the immortal campaign of 1796-1797 in Italy.

The corruption of the court of Barras still recalled something of the gaiety of the old order; the graces of Madame Bonaparte proved that we had no aptitude at that time for the churlishness and charnel-house of the English.

The profound respect, which despite the jealousy of the faubourg Saint-Germain, we could not but feel for the First Consul's method of government, and the men whose superior merit adorned the society of Paris — such as the Cretets and the Darus — relieves the Empire of the burden of responsibility for the remarkable change which has been effected, in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the character of the French.

Unnecessary to carry my investigation further: the reader will reflect and be quite able to draw his own conclusions.

BOOK I.

ON LOVE

CHAPTER I

OF LOVE

MY aim is to comprehend that passion, of which every sincere development has a character of beauty.

There are four kinds of love.

1. Passion-love — that of the Portuguese nun (i), of Héloïse for Abelard, of Captain de Vesel, of Sergeant de Cento.

2. Gallant love — that which ruled in Paris towards 1760, to be found in the memoirs and novels of the period, in Crébillon, Lauzun, Duclos, Marmontel, Chamfort, Mme d'Épinay, etc etc.

'Tis a picture in which everything, to the very shadows, should be rose-colour, in which may enter nothing disagreeable under any pretext whatsoever, at the cost of a lapse of etiquette, of good taste, of refinement, etc. A man of breeding foresees all the ways of acting, that he is likely to adopt or meet with in the different phases of this love. True love is often less refined; for that in which there is no passion and nothing unforeseen, has always a store of ready wit: the latter is a cold and pretty miniature, the former a picture by the Carracci. Passion-love carries us away in defiance of all our interests, gallant love manages always to respect them. True, if we take from this poor love its vanity, there is very little left: once stripped, it is like a tottering convalescent, scarcely able to drag himself along.

3. Physical love. Out hunting — a fresh, pretty country girl crosses your path and escapes into the wood. Everyone knows the love founded on this kind of pleasure: and all begin that way at sixteen, however parched and unhappy the character.

4. Vanity-love. The vast majority of men, especially in France, desire and have a fashionable woman, in the same way as a man gets a fine horse, as something which the luxury of a young man demands. Their vanity more or less flattered, more or less piqued, gives birth to transports of feelings. Sometimes there is also physical love, but by no means always: often there is not so much as physical pleasure. A duchess is never more than thirty for a bourgeois, said the Duchesse de Chaulnes, and those admitted to the Court of that just man, king Lewis of Holland, recall with amusement a pretty woman from the Hague, who could not help finding any man charming who was Duke or Prince. But true to the principle of monarchy, as soon as a Prince arrived at Court, the Duke was dismissed: she was, as it were, the decoration of the diplomatic body.

The happiest case of this uninspiring relationship is that in which to physical pleasure is added habit. In that case store of memories makes it resemble love a little; there is the pique of self-esteem and sadness on being left; then, romance forces upon us its ideas and we believe that we are in love and melancholy, for vanity aspires to credit itself with a great passion. This, at least, is certain that, whatever kind of love be the source of pleasure, as soon as the soul is stirred, the pleasure is keen and its memory alluring, and in this passion, contrary to most of the others, the memory of our losses seems always to exceed the bounds of what we can hope for in the future.

Sometimes, in vanity-love habit or despair of finding better produces a kind of friendship, of all kinds the least pleasant: it prides itself on its security, etc.

Physical pleasure, being of our nature, is known to everybody, but it takes no more than a subordinate position in the eyes of tender and passionate souls. If they raise a laugh in the salons, if often they are made unhappy in the intrigues of society, in return the pleasure which they feel must remain always inaccessible to those hearts, whose beat only vanity and gold can quicken.

A few virtuous and sensitive women have scarcely a conception of physical pleasures: they have so rarely risked them, if one may use the expression, and even then the transports of passion-love caused bodily pleasure almost to be forgotten.

There are men victims and instruments of diabolical pride, of a pride in the style of Alfieri. Those people who, perhaps, are cruel because, like Nero, judging all men after the pattern of their own heart, they are always a-tremble — such people, I say, can attain physical pleasure only in so far as it is accompanied by the greatest possible exercise of pride, in so far, that is to say, as they practise cruelties on the companion of their pleasures. Hence the horrors of Justine (2). At any rate such men have no sense of security.

To conclude, instead of distinguishing four different forms of love, we can easily admit eight or ten shades of difference. Perhaps mankind has as many ways of feeling as of seeing; but these differences of nomenclature alter in no degree the judgments which follow. Subject to the same laws, all forms of love, which can be seen here below, have their birth, life and death or ascend to immortality.

CHAPTER II

OF THE BIRTH OF LOVE

This is what takes place in the soul: —

1. Admiration.

2. A voice within says: “What pleasure to kiss, to be kissed.”

3. Hope (3).

We study her perfections: this is the moment at which a woman should yield to realise the greatest possible physical pleasure. In the case even of the most reserved women, their eyes redden at the moment when hope is conceived: the passion is so strong, the pleasure so keen, that it betrays itself by striking signs.

4. Love is born.

To love — that is to have pleasure in seeing, touching, feeling, through all the senses and as near as possible, an object to be loved and that loves us.

5. The first crystallisation begins.

The lover delights in decking with a thousand perfections the woman of whose love he is sure: he dwells on all the details of his happiness with a satisfaction that is boundless. He is simply magnifying a superb bounty just fallen to him from heaven, — he has no knowledge of it but the assurance of its possession.

Leave the mind of a lover to its natural movements for twenty-four hours, and this is what you will find.

At the salt mines of Salzburg a branch stripped of its leaves by winter is thrown into the abandoned depths of the mine; taken out two or three months later it is covered with brilliant crystals; the smallest twigs, those no stouter than the leg of a sparrow, are arrayed with an infinity of sparkling, dazzling diamonds; it is impossible to recognise the original branch.

I call crystallisation the operation of the mind which, from everything which is presented to it, draws the conclusion that there are new perfections in the object of its love.

A traveller speaks of the freshness of the orange groves at Genoa, on the sea coast, during the scorching days of summer. — What pleasure to enjoy that freshness with her!

One of your friends breaks his arm in the hunting-field. — How sweet to be nursed by a woman you love! To be always with her, to see every moment her love for you, would make pain almost a blessing: and starting from the broken arm of your friend, you conclude with the absolute conviction of the angelic goodness of your mistress. In a word, it is enough to think of a perfection in order to see it in that which you love.

This phenomenon, which I venture to call crystallisation, is the product of human nature, which commands us to enjoy and sends warm blood rushing to our brain; it springs from the conviction that the pleasures of love increase with the perfections of its object, and from the idea: “She is mine.” The savage has no time to go beyond the first step. He is delighted, but his mental activity is employed in following the flying deer in the forest, and with the flesh with which he must as soon as possible repair his forces, or fall beneath the axe of his enemy.

At the other pole of civilisation, I have no doubt that a sensitive woman may come to the point of feeling no physical pleasure but with the man she loves. It is the opposite with the savage. But among civilised peoples, woman has leisure at her disposal, while the savage is so pressed with necessary occupations that he is forced to treat his female as a beast of burden. If the females of many animals are more fortunate, it is because the subsistence of the males is more assured.

But let us leave the backwoods again for Paris. A man of passion sees all perfections in that which he loves. And yet his attention may still be distracted; for the soul has its surfeit of all that is uniform, even of perfect bliss.

This is what happens to distract his attention: —

6. Birth of Doubt.

After ten or twelve glances, or some other series of actions, which can last as well several days as one moment, hopes are first given and later confirmed. The lover, recovered from his first surprise and, accustomed to his happiness or guided by theory, which, always based on the most frequent cases, must only take light women into account — the lover, I say, demands more positive proofs and wishes to press his good fortune.

He is parried with indifference, coldness, even anger, if he show too much assurance — in France a shade of irony, which seems to say: “You are not quite as far as you think.”

A woman behaves in this way, either because she wakes up from a moment of intoxication, and obeys the word of modesty, which she trembles to have infringed, or simply through prudence or coquetry.

The lover comes to doubt of the happiness, to which he looked forward: he scans more narrowly the reasons that he fancied he had for hope.

He would like to fall back upon the other pleasures of life, and finds them annihilated. He is seized with the fear of a terrible disaster, and at the same time with a profound preoccupation.

7. Second crystallisation.

Here begins the second crystallisation, which forms diamonds out of the proofs of the idea—” She loves me.”

The night which follows the birth of doubts, every quarter of an hour, after a moment of fearful unhappiness, the lover says to himself—” Yes, she loves me” — and crystallisation has its turn, discovering new charms. Then doubt

with haggard eye grapples him and brings him to a standstill, blank. His heart forgets to beat—" But does she love me?" he says to himself. Between these alternatives, agonising and rapturous, the poor lover feels in his very soul: "She would give me pleasures, which she alone can give me and no one else."

It is the palpability of this truth, this path on the extreme edge of a terrible abyss and within touch, on the other hand, of perfect happiness, which gives so great a superiority to the second crystallisation over the first.

The lover wanders from moment to moment between these three ideas: —

1. She has every perfection.

2. She loves me.

3. What means of obtaining the greatest proof of her love?

The most agonising moment of love, still young, is when it sees the false reasoning it has made, and must destroy a whole span of crystallisation.

Doubt is the natural outcome of crystallisation.

CHAPTER III

OF HOPE

A VERY small degree of hope is enough to cause the birth of love.

In the course of events hope may fail — love is none the less born. With a firm, daring and impetuous character, and in an imagination developed by the troubles of life, the degree of hope may be smaller: it can come sooner to an end, without killing love.

If a lover has had troubles, if he is of a tender, thoughtful character, if he despairs of other women, and if his admiration is intense for her whom he loves, no ordinary pleasure will succeed in distracting him from the second crystallisation. He will prefer to dream of the most doubtful chance of pleasing her one day, than to accept from an ordinary woman all she could lavish.

The woman whom he loves would have to kill his hope at that period, and (note carefully, not later) in some inhuman manner, and overwhelm him with those marks of patent contempt, which make it impossible to appear again in public.

Far longer delays between all these periods are compatible with the birth of love.

It demands much more hope and much more substantial hope, in the case of the cold, the phlegmatic and the prudent. The same is true of people no longer young.

It is the second crystallisation which ensures love’s duration, for then every moment makes it clear that the question is — be loved or die. Long months of love have turned into habit this conviction of our every moment — how

find means to support the thought of loving no more? The stronger the character the less is it subject to inconstancy.

This second crystallisation is almost entirely absent from the passions inspired by women who yield too soon.

After the crystallisations have worked — especially the second, which is far the stronger — the branch is no longer to be recognised by indifferent eyes, for: —

(1) — It is adorned with perfections which they do not see.

(2) — It is adorned with perfections which for them are not perfections at all.

The perfection of certain charms, mentioned to him by an old friend of his love, and a certain hint of liveliness noticed in her eye, are a diamond in the crystallisation of Del Rosso. These ideas, conceived during the evening, keep him dreaming all the night.

An unexpected answer, which makes me see more clearly a tender, generous, ardent, or, as it is popularly called, romantic soul, preferring to the happiness of kings the simple pleasures of a walk with the loved one at midnight in a lonely wood, gives me food for dreams for a whole night.

Let him call my mistress a prude: I shall call his a whore.

great pleasure to thirty or forty people of Paris, whom I shall never see, but for whom, without knowing, I have a blind affection. Some young Madame Roland, for example, reading her book in secret and precious quickly hiding it, at the least noise, in the drawers of her father’s bench — her father the engraver of watches. A soul like that of Madame Roland will forgive me, I hope, not only the word crystallisation, used to express that act of madness which makes us perceive every beauty, every kind of perfection, in the woman whom we begin to love, but also several too daring ellipses besides. The reader has only to take a pencil and write between the lines the five or six words which are missing.

CHAPTER IV

IN a soul completely detached — a girl living in a lonely castle in the depth of the country — the slightest astonishment may bring on a slight admiration, and, if the faintest hope intervene, cause the birth of love and crystallisation (4).

In this case love delights, to begin with, just as a diversion.

Surprise and hope are strongly supported by the need, felt at the age of sixteen, of love and sadness. It is well known that the restlessness of that age is a thirst for love, and a peculiarity of thirst is not to be extremely fastidious about the kind of draught that fortune offers.

Let us recapitulate the seven stages of love. They are: —

1. Admiration.

2. What pleasure, etc.

3. Hope.

4. Love is born.

5. First crystallisation.

6. Doubt appears.

7. Second crystallisation.

Between Nos. 1 and 2 may pass one year. One month between Nos. 2 and 3; but if hope does not make haste in coming, No. 2 is insensibly resigned as a source of unhappiness.

A twinkling of the eye between Nos. 3 and 4.

There is no interval between Nos. 4 and 5. The sequence can only be broken by intimate intercourse.

Some days may pass between Nos. 5 and 6, according to the degree to which the character is impetuous and used to risk, but between Nos. 6 and 7 there is no interval.

CHAPTER V

MAN is not free to avoid doing that which gives him more pleasure to do than all other possible actions.

Love is like the fever (5), it is born and spends itself without the slightest intervention of the will. That is one of the principal differences between gallant-love and passion-love. And you cannot give yourself credit for the fair qualities in what you really love, any more than for a happy chance.

Further, love is of all ages: observe the passion of Madame du Deffant for the graceless Horace Walpole. A more recent and more pleasing example is perhaps still remembered in Paris.

In proof of great passions I admit only those of their consequences, which are exposed to ridicule: timidity, for example, proves love. I am not speaking of the bashfulness of the enfranchised schoolboy.

CHAPTER VI

THE CRYSTALS OF SALZBURG

CRYSTALLISATION scarcely ceases at all during love. This is its history: so long as all is well between the lover and the loved, there is crystallisation by imaginary solution; it is only imagination which makes him sure that such and such perfection exists in the woman he loves. But after intimate intercourse, fears are continually coming to life, to be allayed only by more real solutions. Thus his happiness is only uniform in its source. Each day has a different bloom.

If the loved one yields to the passion, which she shares, and falls into the enormous error of killing fear by the eagerness of her transports, crystallisation ceases for an instant; but when love loses some of its eagerness, that is to say some of its fears, it acquires the charm of entire' abandon, of confidence without limits: a sense of sweet familiarity comes to take the edge from all the pains of life, and give to fruition another kind of interest.

Are you deserted? — Crystallisation begins again; and every glance of admiration, the sight of every happiness which she can give you, and of which you thought no longer, leads up to this agonising reflexion: "That happiness, that charm, I shall meet it no more. It is lost and the fault is mine!" You may look for happiness in sensations of another kind. Your heart refuses to feel them. Imagination depicts for you well enough the physical situation, mounts you well enough on a fast hunter in

Devonshire woods. But you feel quite certain that there you would find no pleasure. It is the optical illusion produced by a pistol shot.

Gaming has also its crystallisation, provoked by the use of the sum of money to be won.

The hazards of Court life, so regretted by the nobility, under the name of Legitimists, attached themselves so dearly only by the crystallisation they provoked. No courtier existed who did not dream of the rapid fortune of a Luynes or a Lauzun, no charming woman who did not see in prospect the duchy of Madame de Polignac. No rationalist government can give back that crystallisation. Nothing is so anti-imagination as the government of the United States of America. We have noticed that to their neighbours, the savages, crystallisation is almost unknown. The Romans scarcely had an idea of it, and discovered it only for physical love.

Hate has its crystallisation: as soon as it is possible to hope for revenge, hate begins again.

If every creed, in which there is absurdity and inconsequence, tends to place at the head of the party the people who are most absurd, that is one more of the effects of crystallisation. Even in mathematics (observe the Newtonians in 1740) crystallisation goes on in the mind, which cannot keep before it at every moment every part of the demonstration of that which it believes.

In proof, see the destiny of the great German philosophers, whose immortality, proclaimed so often, never manages to last longer than thirty or forty years.

It is the impossibility of fathoming the “why?” of our feelings, which makes the most reasonable man a fanatic in music.

In face of certain contradictions it is not possible to be convinced at will that we are right.

CHAPTER VII

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BIRTH OF LOVE IN THE TWO SEXES

WOMEN attach themselves by the favours they dispense. As nineteen-twentieths of their ordinary dreams are relative to love, after intimate intercourse these day-dreams group themselves round a single object; they have to justify a course so extraordinary, so decisive, so contrary to all the habits of modesty. Men have no such task; and, besides, the imagination of women has time to work in detail upon the sweetness of such moments.

As love casts doubts upon things the best proved, the woman who, before she gave herself, was perfectly sure that her lover was a man above the crowd, no sooner thinks she has nothing left to refuse him, than she is all fears lest he was only trying to put one more woman on his list.

Then, and then only appears the second crystallisation, which, being hand in hand with fear, is far the stronger.

Yesterday a queen, to-day she sees herself a slave. This state of soul and mind is encouraged in a woman by the nervous intoxication resulting from pleasures, which are just so much keener as they are more rare. Besides, a woman before her embroidery frame — insipid work which only occupies the hand — is thinking about her lover; while he is galloping with his squadron over the plain, where leading one wrong movement would bring him under arrest.

I should think, therefore, that the second crystallisation must be far stronger in the case of women, because theirs are more vivid fears; their vanity and honour are compromised; distraction at least is more difficult.

A woman cannot be guided by the habit of being reasonable, which I, Man, working at things cold and reasonable for six hours every day, contract at my office perforce. Even outside love, women are inclined to abandon themselves to their imagination and habitual high spirits: faults, therefore, in the object of their love ought more rapidly to disappear.

Women prefer emotion to reason — that is plain: in virtue of the futility of our customs, none of the affairs of the family fall on their shoulders, so that reason is of no use to them and they never find it of any practical good.

On the contrary, to them it is always harmful; for the only object of its appearance is to scold them for the pleasures of yesterday, or forbid them others for tomorrow.

Give over to your wife the management of your dealings with the bailiffs of two of your farms — I wager the accounts will be kept better than by you, and then, sorry tyrant, you will have the right at least to complain, since to make yourself loved you do not possess the talent. As soon as women enter on general reasonings, they are unconsciously making love. But in matters of detail they take pride in being stricter and more exact than men. Half the small trading is put into the hands of women, who acquit themselves of it better than their husbands. It is a well-known maxim that, if you are speaking business with a woman, you cannot be too serious.

This is because they are at all times and in all places greedy of emotion. — Observe the pleasures of burial rites in Scotland.

CHAPTER VIII

This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aerial palaces. — Bride of Lammermoor, Chap. III.

A GIRL of eighteen has not enough crystallisation in her power, forms desires too limited by her narrow experiences of the things of life, to be in a position to love with as much passion as a woman of twenty-eight (4).

This evening I was exposing this doctrine to a clever woman, who maintains the contrary. “A girl’s imagination being chilled by no disagreeable experience, and the prime of youth burning with all its force, any man can be the motive upon which she creates a ravishing image. Every time that she meets her lover, she will enjoy, not what he is in reality, but that image of delight which she has created for herself.

“Later, she is by this lover and by all men disillusioned, experience of the dark reality has lessened in her the power of crystallisation, mistrust has clipped the wings of imagination. At the instance of no man on earth, were he a very prodigy, could she form so irresistible an image: she could love no more with the same fire of her first youth. And as in love it is only the illusion formed by ourselves which we enjoy, never can the image, which she may create herself at twenty-eight, have the brilliance and the loftiness on which first love was built at sixteen: the second will always seem of a degenerate species.”

“No, madam. Evidently it is the presence of mistrust, absent at sixteen, which must give to this second love a different colour. In early youth love is like an immense stream, which sweeps all before it in its course, and we feel that we cannot resist it. Now at twenty-eight a gentle heart knows itself: it knows that, if it is still to find some happiness in life, from love it must be claimed; and this poor, torn heart becomes the seat of a fearful struggle between love and mistrust. Crystallisation proceeds gradually; but the crystallisation, which emerges triumphant from this terrible proof, in which the soul in all its movements never loses sight of the most awful danger, is a

thousand times more brilliant and more solid than crystallisation at sixteen, in which everything, by right of age, is gaiety and happiness."

"In this way love should be less gay and more passionate."

This conversation (Bologna, 9 March, 1820), bringing into doubt a point which seemed to me so clear, makes me believe more and more, that a man can say practically nothing with any sense on that which happens in the inmost heart of a woman of feeling: as to a coquet it is different — we also have senses and vanity.

The disparity between the birth of love in the two sexes would seem to come from the nature of their hopes, which are different. One attacks, the other defends; one asks, the other refuses; one is daring, the other timid.

The man reflects: "Can I please her? Will she love me?"

The woman: "When he says he loves me, isn't it for sport? Is his a solid character? Can he answer to himself for the length of his attachments?" Thus it is that many women regard and treat a young man of twenty-three as a child. If he has gone through six campaigns, he finds everything different — he is a young hero.

On the man's side, hope depends simply on the actions of that which he loves — nothing easier to interpret. On the side of woman, hope must rest on moral considerations — very difficult rightly to appreciate.

Most men demand such a proof of love, as to their mind dissipates all doubts; women are not so fortunate as to be able to find such a proof. And there is in life this trouble for lovers — that what makes the security and happiness of one, makes the danger and almost the humiliation of the other.

In love, men run the risk of the secret torture of the soul — women expose themselves to the scoffs of the public; they are more timid, and, besides, for them public opinion means much more.—"Sois considérée, il le faut."

They have not that sure means of ours of mastering public opinion by risking for an instant their life.

Women, then, must naturally be far more mistrustful. In virtue of their habits, all the mental movements, which form periods in the birth of love, are in their case more mild, more timid, more gradual and less decided. There is therefore a greater disposition to constancy; they will less easily withdraw from a crystallisation once begun.

A woman, seeing her lover, reflects with rapidity, or yields to the happiness of loving — happiness from which she is recalled in a disagreeable manner, if he make the least attack; for at the call to arms all pleasures must be abandoned.

The lover's part is simpler — he looks in the eyes of the woman he loves; a single smile can raise him to the zenith of happiness, and he looks continually for it.

The length of the siege humiliates a man; on the contrary it makes a woman's glory.

A woman is capable of loving and, for an entire year, not saying more than ten or twelve words to the man whom she loves. At the bottom of her heart she keeps note how often she has seen him — twice she went with him to the theatre, twice she sat near him at dinner, three times he bowed to her out walking.

One evening during some game he kissed her hand: it is to be noticed that she allows no one since to kiss it under any pretext, at the risk even of seeming peculiar.

In a man, Léonore (6) remarked to me, such conduct would be called a feminine way of love.

CHAPTER IX

I MAKE every possible effort to be dry. I would impose silence upon my heart, which feels that it has much to say. When I think that I have noted a truth, I always tremble lest I have written only a sigh.

CHAPTER X

IN proof of crystallisation I shall content myself with recalling the following anecdote. A young woman hears that Edward, her relation, who is to return from the Army, is a youth of great distinction; she is assured that he loves her on her reputation; but he will want probably to see her, before making a proposal and asking her of her parents. She notices a young stranger at church, she hears him called Edward, she thinks of nothing but him — she is in love with him. Eight days later the real Edward arrives; he is not the Edward of church. She turns pale and will be unhappy for ever, if she is forced to marry him.

That is what the poor of understanding call an example of the senselessness of love.

A man of generosity lavishes the most delicate benefits upon a girl in distress. No one could have more virtues, and love was about to be born; but he wears a shabby hat, and she notices that he is awkward in the saddle. The girl confesses with a sigh that she cannot return the warm feelings, which he evidently has for her.

A man pays his attentions to a lady of the greatest respectability. She hears that this gentleman has had physical troubles of a comical nature: she finds him intolerable. And yet she had no intention of giving herself to him, and these secret troubles in no way blighted his understanding or amiability. It is simply that crystallisation was made impossible.

In order that a human being may delight in deifying an object to be loved, be it taken from the Ardennes forest or picked up at a Bal de Coulon, that it seems to him perfect is the first necessity — perfect by no means in every relation, but in every relation in which it is seen at the time. Perfect in all respects it will seem only after several days of the second crystallisation. The reason is simple — then it is enough to have the idea of a perfection in order to see it in the object of our love.

Beauty is only thus far necessary to the birth of love — ugliness must not form an obstacle. The lover soon comes to find his mistress beautiful, such as she is, without thinking of ideal beauty.

The features which make up the ideally beautiful would promise, if he could see them, a quantity of happiness, if I may use the expression, which I would express by the number one; whereas the features of his mistress, such as they are, promise him one thousand units of happiness.

Before the birth of love beauty is necessary as advertisement: it predisposes us towards that passion by means of the praises, which we hear given to the object of our future love. Very eager admiration makes the smallest hope decisive.

In gallant-love, and perhaps in passion-love during the first five minutes, a woman, considering a possible lover, gives more weight to the way in which he is seen by other women, than to the way in which she sees him herself.

Hence the success of princes and officers. The pretty women of the Court of old king Lewis XIV were in love with that sovereign.

Great care should be taken not to offer facilities to hope, before it is certain that admiration is there. It might give rise to dullness, which makes love for ever impossible, and which, at any rate, is only to be cured by the sting of wounded pride.

No one feels sympathy for the simpleton, nor for a smile which is always there; hence the necessity in society of a veneer of rakishness — that is, the privileged manner. From too debased a plant we scorn to gather even a smile. In love, our vanity disdains a victory which is too easy; and in all matters man is not given to magnifying the value of an offering.

CHAPTER XI

CRYSTALLISATION having once begun, we enjoy with delight each new beauty discovered in that which we love.

But what is beauty? It is the appearance of an aptitude for giving you pleasure.

The pleasures of all individuals are different and often opposed to one another; which explains very well how that, which is beauty for one individual, is ugliness for another. (Conclusive example of Del Rosso and Lisio, 1st January, 1820.)

The right way to discover the nature of beauty is to look for the nature of the pleasures of each individual. Del Rosso, for example, needs a woman who allows a certain boldness of movement, and who by her smiles authorises considerable licence; a woman who at each instant holds physical pleasures before his imagination, and who excites in him the power of pleasing, while giving him at the same time the means of displaying it.

Apparently, by love Del Rosso understands physical love, and Lisio passion-love. Obviously they are not likely to agree about the word beauty.

The beauty then, discovered by you, being the appearance of an aptitude for giving you pleasure, and pleasure being different from pleasure as man from man, the crystallisation formed in the head of each individual must bear the colour of that individual's pleasures.

A man's crystallisation of his mistress, or her beauty, is no other thing than the collection of all the satisfactions of all the desires, which he can have felt successively at her instance.

CHAPTER XII

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF CRYSTALLISATION

WHY do we enjoy with delight each new beauty, discovered in that which we love?

It is because each new beauty gives the full and entire satisfaction of a desire. You wish your mistress gentle — she is gentle; and then you wish her proud like Emilie in Corneille, and although these qualities are probably incompatible, instantly she appears with the soul of a Roman. That is the moral reason which makes love the strongest of the passions. In all others, desires must accommodate themselves to cold realities; here it is realities which model themselves spontaneously upon desires. Of all the passions, therefore, it is in love that violent desires find the greatest satisfaction.

There are certain general conditions of happiness, whose influence extends over every fulfilment of particular desires: —

1. She seems to belong to you, for you only can make her happy.

2. She is the judge of your worth. This condition was very important at the gallant and chivalrous Courts of Francis I and Henry II, and at the elegant Court of Lewis XV. Under a constitutional and rationalist government women lose this range of influence entirely.

3. For a romantic heart — The loftier her soul, the more sublime will be the pleasures that await her in your arms, and the more purified of the dross of all vulgar considerations.

The majority of young Frenchmen are, at eighteen, disciples of Rousseau; for them this condition of happiness is important.

In the midst of operations so apt to mislead our desire of happiness, there is no keeping cool.

For, the moment he is in love, the steadiest man sees no object such as it is. His own advantages he minimises, and magnifies the smallest favours of the loved one. Fears and hopes take at once a tinge of the romantic. (Wayward.) He no longer attributes anything to chance; he loses the perception of probability; in its effect upon his happiness a thing imagined is a thing existent.

A terrible symptom that you are losing your head: — you think of some little thing which is difficult to make out; you see it white, and interpret that in favour of your love; a moment later you notice that actually it is black, and still you find it conclusively favourable to your love.

Then indeed the soul, a prey to mortal uncertainties, feels keenly the need of a friend. But there is no friend for the lover. The Court knew that; and it is the source of the only kind of indiscretion which a woman of delicacy might forgive.

CHAPTER XIII

OF THE FIRST STEP; OF THE FASHIONABLE WORLD; OF MISFORTUNES

THAT which is most surprising in the passion of love is the first step — the extravagance of the change, which comes over a man's brain.

The fashionable world, with its brilliant parties, is of service to love in favouring this first step.

It begins by changing simple admiration (i) into tender admiration (ii) — what pleasure to kiss her, etc.

In a salon lit by thousands of candles a fast valse throws a fever upon young hearts, eclipses timidity, swells the consciousness of power — in fact, gives them the daring to love. For to see a lovable object is not enough: on the contrary, the fact that it is extremely lovable discourages a gentle soul — he must see it, if not in love with him, at least despoiled of its majesty.

Who takes it into his head to become the paramour of a queen unless the advances are from her?

Thus nothing is more favourable to the birth of love than a life of irksome solitude, broken now and again by a long-desired ball. This is the plan of wise mothers who have daughters.

The real fashionable world, such as was found at the

Court of France, and which since 1780, I think, exists no more, was unfavourable to love, because it made the solitude and the leisure, indispensable to the work of crystallisation, almost impossible.

Court life gives the habit of observing and making a great number of subtle distinctions, and the subtlest distinction may be the beginning of an admiration and of a passion.

When the troubles of love are mixed with those of another kind (the troubles of vanity — if your mistress offend your proper pride, your sense of honour or personal dignity — troubles of health, money and political persecution, etc.), it is only in appearance that love is increased by these annoyances. Occupying the imagination otherwise, they prevent crystallisation in love still hopeful, and in happy love the birth of little doubts. When these misfortunes have departed, the sweetness and the folly of love return.

Observe that misfortunes favour the birth of love in light and unsensitive characters, and that, after it is born, misfortunes, which existed before, are favourable to it; in as much as the imagination, recoiling from the gloomy impressions offered by all the other circumstances of life, throws itself wholly into the work of crystallisation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE following point, which will be disputed, I offer only to those — shall I say unhappy enough? — to have loved with passion during long years, and loved in the face of invincible obstacles: —

The sight of all that is extremely beautiful in nature and in art recalls, with the swiftness of lightning, the memory of that which we love. It is by the process of the jewelled branch in the mines of Salzburg, that everything in the world which is beautiful and lofty contributes to the beauty of that which we love, and that forthwith a sudden glimpse of delight fills the eyes with tears. In this way, love and the love of beauty give life mutually to one another.

One of life's miseries is that the happiness of seeing and talking to the object of our love leaves no distinct memories behind. The soul, it seems, is too troubled by its emotions for that which causes or accompanies them to impress it. The soul and its sensations are one and the same. It is perhaps because these pleasures cannot be used up by voluntary recollection, that they return again and again with such force, as soon as ever some object comes to drag us from day-dreams devoted to the woman we love, and by some new connexion to bring her still more vividly to our memory.

A dry old architect used to meet her in society every evening. Following a natural impulse, and without paying attention to what I was saying to her, I one day sang his praises in a sentimental and pompous strain, which made her laugh at me. I had not the strength to say to her: "He sees you every evening."

So powerful is this sensation that it extends even to the person of my enemy, who is always at her side. When I see her, she reminds me of Leonore so much, that at the time I cannot hate her, however much I try.

It looks as if, by a curious whim of the heart, the charm, which the woman we love can communicate, were greater than that which she herself

possesses. The vision of that distant city, where we saw her a moment, throws us into dreams sweeter and more profound than would her very presence. It is the effect of harsh treatment.

The day-dreams of love cannot be scrutinised. I have observed that I can re-read a good novel every three years with the same pleasure. It gives me feelings akin to the kind of emotional taste, which dominates me at the moment, or if my feelings are nil, makes for variety in my ideas. Also, can listen with pleasure to the same music, but, in this, memory must not intrude. The imagination should be affected and nothing else; if, at the twentieth representation, an opera gives more pleasure, it is either because the music is better understood, or because it also brings back the feeling it gave at the first.

As to new lights, which a novel may throw upon our knowledge of the human heart, I still remember clearly the old ones, and am pleased even to find them noted in the margin. But this kind of pleasure pertains to the novels, in so far as they advance me in the knowledge of man, and not in the least to day-dreaming — the veritable pleasure of novels. Such day-dreaming is inscrutable. To watch it is for the present to kill it, for you fall into a philosophical analysis of pleasure; and it is killing it still more certainly for the future, for nothing is surer to paralyse the imagination than the appeal to memory (9). If I find in the margin a note, depicting my feelings on reading Old Mortality three years ago in Florence, I am plunged immediately into the history of my life, into an estimate of the degree of happiness at the two epochs, in short, into the deepest problems of philosophy — and then good-bye for a long season to the unchecked play of tender feelings.

Every great poet with a lively imagination is timid, he is afraid of men, that is to say, for the interruptions and troubles with which they can invade the delight of his dreams. He fears for his concentration. Men come along with their gross interests to drag him from the gardens of Armida, and force him into a fetid slough: only by irritating him can they fix his attention on themselves. It is this habit of feeding his soul upon touching dreams and this horror of the vulgar which draws a great artist so near to love.

The more of the great artist a man has in him, the more must he wish for titles and honours as a bulwark.

CHAPTER XV

SUDDENLY in the midst of the most violent and the most thwarted passion come moments, when a man believes that he is in love no longer — as it were a spring of fresh water in the middle of the sea. To think of his mistress is no longer very much pleasure, and, although he is worn-out by the severity of her treatment, the fact that everything in life has lost its interest is a still greater misery. After a manner of existence which, fitful though it was, gave to all nature a new aspect, passionate and absorbing, now follows the dreariest and most despondent void.

It may be that your last visit to the woman, whom you love, left you in a situation, from which, once before, your imagination had gathered the full harvest of sensation. For example, after a period of coldness, she has treated you less badly, letting you conceive exactly the same degree of hope and by the same external signs as on a previous occasion — all this perhaps unconsciously. Imagination picks up memory and its sinister warnings by the way, and instantly crystallisation ceases.

CHAPTER XVI

In a small port, the name of which I forget, near Perpignan, 25th February, 1822.

THIS evening I have just found out that music, when it is perfect, puts the heart into the same state as it enjoys in the presence of the loved one — that is to say, it gives seemingly the keenest happiness existing on the face of the earth.

If this were so for all men, there would be no more favourable incentive to love.

But I had already remarked at Naples last year that perfect music, like perfect pantomime, makes me think of that which is at the moment the object of my dreams, and that the ideas, which it suggests to me, are excellent: at Naples, it was on the means of arming the Greeks.

Now this evening I cannot deceive myself — I have the misfortune of being too great an admirer of milady L.

And perhaps the perfect music, which I have had the luck to hear again, after two or three months of privation, although going nightly to the Opera, has simply had the effect, which I recognised long ago — I mean that of producing lively thoughts on what is already in the heart.

March 4th — eight days later.

I dare neither erase nor approve the preceding observation. Certain it is that, as I wrote it, I read it in my heart. If to-day I bring it into question, it is because I have lost the memory of what I saw at that time.

The habit of hearing music and dreaming its dreams disposes towards love. A sad and gentle air, provided it is not too dramatic, so that the imagination is forced to dwell on the action, is a direct stimulant to dreams of love and a delight for gentle and unhappy souls: for example, the drawn-out passage on

the clarionet at the beginning of the quartet in Bianca and Faliero (10), and the recitative of La Camporesi towards the middle of the quartet.

A lover at peace with his mistress enjoys to distraction Rossini's famous duet in Armida and Rinaldo, depicting so justly the little doubts of happy love and the moments of delight which follow its reconciliations. It seems to him that the instrumental part, which comes in the middle of the duet, at the moment when Rinaldo wishes to fly, and represents in such an amazing way the conflict of the passions, has a physical influence upon his heart and touches it in reality. On this subject I dare not say what I feel; I should pass for a madman among people of the north.

CHAPTER XVII

BEAUTY DETHRONED BY LOVE

ALBERIC meets in a box at the theatre a woman more beautiful than his mistress (I beg to be allowed here a mathematical valuation) — that is to say, her features promise three units of happiness instead of two, supposing the quantity of happiness given by perfect beauty to be expressed by the number four.

Is it surprising that he prefers the features of his mistress, which promise a hundred units of happiness for him? Even the minor defects of her face, a smallpox mark, for example, touches the heart of the man who loves, and, when he observes them even in another woman, sets him dreaming far away. What, then, when he sees them in his mistress? Why, he has felt a thousand sentiments in presence of that small-pox mark, sentiments for the most part sweet, and all of the greatest interest; and now, such as they are, they are evoked afresh with incredible vividness by the sight of this sign, even in the face of another woman.

If ugliness thus comes to be preferred and loved, it is because in this case ugliness is beauty. A man was passionately in love with a woman, very thin and scarred with small-pox: death bereft him of her. At Rome, three years after, he makes friends with two women, one more lovely than the day, the other thin, scarred with small-pox, and thereby, if you will, quite ugly. There he is, at the end of a week, in love with the ugly one — and this week he employs in effacing her ugliness with his memories; and with a very pardonable coquetry the lesser beauty did not fail to help him in the operation with a slight whip-up of the pulse. A man meets a woman and is offended by her ugliness; soon, if she is unpretentious, her expression makes him forget the defects, of her features; he finds her amiable — he conceives that one could love her. A week later he has hopes; another week and they are taken from him; another and he’s mad.

CHAPTER XVIII

LIMITATIONS OF BEAUTY

AN analogy is to be seen at the theatre in the reception of the public's favourite actors: the spectators are no longer conscious of the beauty or ugliness which the actors have in reality. Lekain, for all his remarkable ugliness, had a harvest of broken hearts — Garrick also. There are several reasons for this; the principal being that it was no longer the actual beauty of their features or their ways which people saw, but emphatically that which imagination was long since used to lend them, as a return for, and in memory of, all the pleasure they had given it. Why, take a comedian — his face alone raises a laugh as he first walks on.

A girl going for the first time to the Français would perhaps feel some antipathy to Lekain during the first scene; but soon he was making her weep or shiver — and how resist him as Tancrède or Orosmane?

If his ugliness were still a little visible to her eyes, the fervour of an entire audience, and the nervous effect produced upon a young heart, soon managed to eclipse it. If anything was still heard about his ugliness, it was mere talk; but not a word of it — Lekain's lady enthusiasts could be heard to exclaim "He's lovely!"

Remember that beauty is the expression of character, or, put differently, of moral habits, and that consequently it is exempt from all passion. Now it is passion that we want. Beauty can only supply us with probabilities about a woman, and probabilities, moreover, based on her capacity for self-possession; while the glances of your mistress with her small-pox scars are a delightful reality, which destroys all the probabilities in the world.

was still further enlarged: there was a Libera at which all eyes were full of tears."

It is as impossible to doubt the truth of this effect, as to refuse wit or refinement to Madame de Sévigné. Lully's music, which charmed her, would make us run away at present; in her day, his music encouraged crystallisation — it makes it impossible in ours.

CHAPTER XIX

LIMITATIONS OF BEAUTY — (continued)

A WOMAN of quick fancy and tender heart, but timid and cautious in her sensibility, who the day after she appears in society, passes in review a thousand times nervously and painfully all that she may have said or given hint of — such a woman, I say, grows easily used to want of beauty in a man: it is hardly an obstacle in rousing her affection.

It is really on the same principle that you care next to nothing for the degree of beauty in a mistress, whom you adore and who repays you with harshness. You have very nearly stopped crystallising her beauty, and when your friend in need tells you that she isn't pretty, you are almost ready to agree. Then he thinks he has made great way.

My friend, brave Captain Trab, described to me this evening his feelings on seeing Mirabeau once upon a time. No one looking upon that great man felt a disagreeable sensation in the eyes — that is to say, found him ugly. People were carried away by his thundering words; they fixed their attention, they delighted in fixing their attention, only on what was beautiful in his face. As he had practically no beautiful features (in the sense of sculpturesque or picturesque beauty) they minded only what beauty he had of another kind, the beauty of expression.

While attention was blind to all traces of ugliness, picturesquely speaking, it fastened on the smallest passable details with fervour — for example, the beauty of his vast head of hair. If he had had horns, people would have thought them lovely. the imagination, the public take hold of one of the three following ideas of beauty: —

(1) The people — of the idea of wealth.

(2) — The upper classes — of the idea of elegance, material or moral.

(3) — The Court — of the idea: “My object is to please the women.”

Almost all take hold of a mixture of all three. The happiness attached to the idea of riches is linked to a refinement in the pleasure which the idea of elegance suggests, and the whole comes into touch with love. In one way or another the imagination is led on by novelty. It is possible in this way to be interested in a very ugly man without thinking of his ugliness, and in good time his ugliness becomes beauty. At Vienna, in 1788, Madame Viganô, a dancer and the woman of the moment, was with child — very soon the ladies took to wearing little Ventres àla Vigan’o. For the same reason reversed, nothing more fearful than a fashion out of date! Bad taste is a confusion of fashion, which lives only by change, with the lasting beauty produced by such and such a government, guided by such and such a climate. A building in fashion to-day, in ten years will be out of fashion. It will be less displeasing in two hundred years, when its fashionable day will be forgotten. Lovers are quite mad to think about their dress; a woman has other things to do, when seeing the object of her love, than to bother about his get-up; we look at our lover, we do not examine him, says Rousseau. If this examination takes place, we are dealing with gallant-love and not passion-love. The brilliance of beauty is almost offensive in the object of our love; it is none of our business to see her beautiful, we want her tender and languishing. Adornment has effect in love only upon girls, who are so rigidly guarded in their parents’ house, that they often lose their hearts through their eyes. (L.’s words. September 15, 1820.)

The appearance every evening of a pretty dancer forces a little interest from those poor souls, blasé or bereft of imagination, who adorn the balcony of the opera. By her graceful movements, daring and strange, she awakens their physical love and procures them perhaps the only crystallisation of which they are still capable. This is the way by which a young scarecrow, who in the street would not have been honoured with a glance, least of all from people the worse for wear, has only to appear frequently on the stage, and she manages to get herself handsomely supported. Geoffroy used to say that the theatre is the pedestal of woman. The more notorious and the more dilapidated a dancer, the more she is worth; hence the green-room proverb: “Some get sold at a price who wouldn’t be taken as a gift.” These women

steal part of their passions from their lovers, and are very susceptible of love from pique.

How manage not to connect generous or lovable sentiments with the face of an actress, in whose features there is nothing repugnant, whom for two hours every evening we see expressing the most noble feelings, and whom otherwise we do not know? When at last you succeed in being received by her, her features recall such pleasing feelings, that the entire reality which surrounds her, however little nobility it may sometimes possess, is instantly invested with romantic and touching colours.

“Devotee, in the days of my youth, of that boring French tragedy, whenever I had the luck of supping with Mile. Olivier, I found myself every other moment overbrimming with respect, in the belief that I was speaking to a queen; and really I have never been quite sure whether, in her case, I had fallen in love with a queen or a pretty tart.”

CHAPTER XX

PERHAPS men who are not susceptible to the feelings of passion-love are those most keenly sensitive to the effects of beauty: that at least is the strongest impression which such men can receive of women.

He who has felt his heart beating at a distant glimpse of the white satin hat of the woman he loves, is quite amazed by the chill left upon him by the approach of the greatest beauty in the world. He may even have a qualm of distress, to observe the excitement of others.

Extremely lovely women cause less surprise the second day. 'Tis a great misfortune, it discourages crystallisation. Their merit being obvious to all and public property, they are bound to reckon more fools in the list of their lovers than princes, millionaires, etc.

CHAPTER XXI

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

IMAGINATIVE souls are sensitive and also mistrustful, even the most ingenuous, — I maintain. They may be suspicious without knowing it: they have had so many disappointments in life. Thus everything set-out and official, when a man is first introduced, scares the imagination and drives away the possibility of crystallisation; the romantic is then, on the contrary, love's triumph.

Nothing simpler — for in the supreme astonishment, which keeps the thoughts busy for long upon something out of the ordinary, is already half the mental exercise necessary to crystallisation.

I will quote the beginning of the Amours of Séraphine (Gil Blas, Bk. IV, Chap. X). It is Don Fernando who tells the story of his flight, when pursued by the agents of the inquisition....

After crossing several walks I came to a drawing-room, the door of which was also left open. I entered, and when I had observed all its magnificence... One side of the room a door stood ajar; I partly opened it and saw a suite of apartments whereof only the furthest was lighted. "What is to be done now?" I asked myself.... I could not resist my curiosity.... Advancing boldly, I went through all the rooms and reached one where there was a light — to wit, a taper upon a marble table in a silver-gilt candlestick.... But soon afterwards, casting my eyes upon a bed, the curtains of which were partly drawn on account of the heat, I perceived an object which at once engrossed my attention: a young lady, fast asleep in spite of the noise of the thunder, which had just been bursting forth. I softly drew near her. My mind was suddenly troubled at the sight. Whilst I feasted my eyes with the pleasure of beholding her, she awoke.

Imagine her surprise at seeing in her room at midnight a man who was an utter stranger to her! She trembled on beholding me and shrieked aloud.... I took pains to reassure her and throwing myself on my knees before her, said —" Madam, have no fear." She called her women... Grown a little braver by his (an old servant's) presence, she haughtily asked me who I was, etc etc."

There is an introduction not easily to be forgotten! On the other hand, could there be anything sillier in our customs of to-day than the official, and at the same time almost sentimental, introduction of the young wooer to his future wife: such legal prostitution goes so far as to be almost offensive to modesty.

"I have just been present this afternoon, February 17th, 1790," says Chamfort, "at a so-called family function. That is to say, men of respectable reputation and a decent company were congratulating on her good fortune Mlle, de Marille, a young person of beauty, wit and virtue, who is to be favoured with becoming the wife of M. R. — an unhealthy dotard, repulsive, dishonest, and mad, but rich: she has seen him for the third time to-day, when signing the contract. If anything characterises an age of infamy, it is the jubilation on an occasion like this, it is the folly of such joy and — looking ahead — the sanctimonious cruelty, with which the same society will heap contempt without reserve upon the pettiest imprudence of a poor young woman in love."

Ceremony of all kinds, being in its essence something affected and set-out beforehand, in which the point is to act "properly," paralyses the imagination and leaves it awake only to that which is opposed to the object of the ceremony, e g something comical — whence the magic effect of the slightest joke. A poor girl, struggling against nervousness and attacks of modesty during the official introduction of her fiancé, can think of nothing but the part she is playing, and this again is a certain means of stifling the imagination.

Modesty has far more to say against getting into bed with a man whom you have seen but twice, after three Latin words have been spoken in church, than against giving way despite yourself to the man whom for two years you have adored. But I am talking double Dutch.

The fruitful source of the vices and mishaps, which follow our marriages nowadays, is the Church of Rome. It makes liberty for girls impossible before marriage, and divorce impossible, when once they have made their mistake, or rather when they find out the mistake of the choice forced on them. Compare Germany, the land of happy marriages: a delightful princess (Madame la Duchesse de Sa —) has just married in all good faith for the fourth time, and has not failed to ask to the wedding her three first husbands, with whom she is on the best terms. That is going too far; but a single divorce, which punishes a husband for his tyranny, prevents a thousand cases of unhappy wedded life. What is amusing is that Rome is one of the places where you see most divorces.

Love goes out at first sight towards a face, which reveals in a man at once something to respect and something to pity.

CHAPTER XXII

OF INFATUATION

THE most fastidious spirits are very given to curiosity and prepossession: this is to be seen, especially, in beings in which that sacred fire, the source of the passions, is extinct — in fact it is one of the most fatal symptoms. There is also the infatuation of schoolboys just admitted to society. At the two poles of life, with too much or too little sensibility, there is little chance of simple people getting the right effect from things, or feeling the genuine sensation which they ought to give. These beings, either too ardent or excessive in their ardour, amorous on credit, if one may use the expression, throw themselves at objects instead of awaiting them.

From afar off and without looking they enfold things in that imaginary charm, of which they find a perennial source within themselves, long before sensation, which is the consequence of the object's nature, has had time to reach them. Then, on coming to close quarters, they see these things not such as they are, but as they have made them; they think they are enjoying such and such an object, while, under cover of that object, they are enjoying themselves. But one fine day a man gets tired of keeping the whole thing going; he discovers that his idol is not playing the game; infatuation collapses and the resulting shock to his self-esteem makes him unfair to that which he appreciated too highly.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE THUNDERBOLT FROM THE BLUE(II)

SO ridiculous an expression ought to be changed, yet the thing exists. I have seen the amiable and noble Wilhelmina, the despair of the beaux of Berlin, making light of love and laughing at its folly. In the brilliance of youth, wit, beauty and all kinds of good luck — a boundless fortune, giving her the opportunity of developing all her qualities, seemed to conspire with nature to give the world an example, rarely seen, of perfect happiness bestowed upon an object perfectly worthy. She was twenty-three years old and, already some time at Court, had won the homage of the bluest blood. Her virtue, unpretentious but invulnerable, was quoted as a pattern. Henceforth the most charming men, despairing of their powers of fascination, aspired only to make her their friend. One evening she goes to a ball at Prince Ferdinand's: she dances for ten minutes with a young Captain.

"From that moment," she writes subsequently to a friend, "he was master of my heart and of me, and this to a degree that would have filled me with terror, if the happiness of seeing Herman had left me time to think of the rest of existence. My only thought was to observe whether he gave me a little notice.

"To-day the only consolation that I might find for my fault is to nurse the illusion within me, that it is through a superior power that I am lost to reason and to myself. I have no word to describe, in a way that comes at all near the reality, the degree of disorder and turmoil to which the mere sight of him could bring my whole being. I blush to think of the rapidity and the violence with which I was drawn towards him. If his first word, when at last he spoke to me, had been 'Do you adore me?' — truly I should not have had the power to have answered anything but 'yes.' I was far from thinking that the effect of a feeling could be at once so sudden and so unforeseen. In fact, for an instant, I believed that I had been poisoned.

“Unhappily you and the world, my dear friend, know how well I have loved Herman. Well, after quarter of an hour he was so dear to me that he cannot have become dearer since. I saw then all his faults and I forgave them all, provided only he would love me.

“Soon after I had danced with him, the king left: Herman, who belonged to the suite, had to follow him. With him, everything in nature disappeared. It is no good to try to depict the excess of weariness with which I felt weighed down, as soon as he was out of my sight. It was equal only to the keenness of my desire to be alone with myself.

“At last I got away. No sooner the door of my room shut and bolted than I wanted to resist my passion. I thought I should succeed. Ah, dear friend, believe me I paid dear that evening and the following days for the pleasure of being able to credit myself with some virtue.”

The preceding lines are the exact story of an event which was the topic of the day; for after a month or two poor Wilhelmina was unfortunate enough for people to take notice of her feelings. Such was the origin of that long series of troubles by which she perished so young and so tragically — poisoned by herself or her lover. All that we could see in this young Captain was that he was an excellent dancer; he had plenty of gaiety and still more assurance, a general air of good nature and spent his time with prostitutes; for the rest, scarcely a nobleman, quite poor and not seen at Court.

In these cases it is not enough to have no misgivings — one must be sick of misgivings — have, so to speak, the impatience of courage to face life’s chances.

The soul of a woman, grown tired, without noticing it, of living without loving, convinced in spite of herself by the example of other women — all the fears of life surmounted and the sorry happiness of pride found wanting — ends in creating unconsciously a model, an ideal. One day she meets this model: crystallisation recognises its object by the commotion it inspires and consecrates for ever to the master of its fortunes the fruit of all its previous dreams.

Women, whose hearts are open to this misfortune, have too much grandeur of soul to love otherwise than with passion. They would be saved if they could stoop to gallantry.

As “thunderbolts” come from a secret lassitude in what the catechism calls Virtue, and from boredom brought on by the uniformity of perfection, I should be inclined to think that it would generally be the privilege of what is known in the world as “a bad lot” to bring them down. I doubt very much whether rigidity à la Cato has ever been the occasion of a “thunderbolt.”

What makes them so rare is that if the heart, thus disposed to love beforehand, has the slightest inkling of its situation, there is no thunderbolt.

The soul of a woman, whom troubles have made mistrustful, is not susceptible of this revolution.

Nothing facilitates “a thunderbolt” like praise, given in advance and by women, to the person who is to occasion it.

False “thunderbolts” form one of the most comic sources of love stories. A weary woman, but one without much feeling, thinks for a whole evening that she is in love for life. She is proud of having found at last one of those great commotions of the soul, which used to allure her imagination. The next day she no longer knows where to hide her face and, still more, how to avoid the wretched object she was adoring the night before.

Clever people know how to spot, that is to say, make capital out of these “thunderbolts.”

Physical love also has its “thunderbolts.” Yesterday in her carriage with the prettiest and most easy-going woman in Berlin, we saw her suddenly blush. She became deeply absorbed and preoccupied. Handsome Lieutenant Findorff had just passed. In the evening at the play, according to her own confession to me, she was out of her mind, she was beside herself, she could think of nothing but Findorff, to whom she had never spoken. If she had dared, she told me, she would have sent for him — that pretty face bore all the signs of the most violent passion. The next day it was still going on.

After three days, Findorff having played the blockhead, she thought no more about it. A month later she loathed him.

CHAPTER XXIV

VOYAGE IN AN UNKNOWN LAND

I ADVISE the majority of people born in the North to skip the present chapter. It is an obscure dissertation upon certain phenomena relative to the orange-tree, a plant which does not grow or reach its full height except in Italy and Spain. In order to be intelligible elsewhere, I should have had to cut down the facts.

I should have had no hesitation about this, if for a single moment I had intended to write a book to be generally appreciated. But Heaven having refused me the writer's gift, I have thought solely of describing with all the ill-grace of science, but also with all its exactitude, certain facts, of which I became involuntarily the witness through a prolonged sojourn in the land of the orange-tree. Frederick the Great, or some such other distinguished man from the North, who never had the opportunity of seeing the orange-tree growing in the open, would doubtless have denied the facts which follow — and denied in good faith. I have an infinite respect for such good faith and can see its wherefore.

As this sincere declaration may seem presumption, I append the following reflexion: —

We write haphazard, each one of us what we think true, and each gives the lie to his neighbour. I see in our books so many tickets in a lottery and in reality they have no more value. Posterity, forgetting some and reprinting others, declares the lucky numbers. And in so far, each one of us having written as best he can, what he thinks true, has no right to laugh at his neighbour — except where the satire is amusing. In that case he is always right, especially if he writes like M. Courrier to Del Furia (12).

After this preamble, I am going bravely to enter into the examination of facts which, I am convinced, have rarely been observed at Paris. But after all at Paris, superior as of course it is to all other towns, orange-trees are not seen growing out in the open, as at Sorrento, and it is there that Lisio Visconti observed and noted the following facts — at Sorrento, the country of Tasso, on the Bay of Naples in a position half-way down to the sea, still more picturesque than that of Naples itself, but where no one reads the Miroir.

When we are to see in the evening the woman we love, the suspense, the expectation of so great a happiness makes every moment, which separates us from it, unbearable.

A devouring fever makes us take up and lay aside twenty different occupations. We look every moment at our watch — overjoyed when we see that we have managed to pass ten minutes without looking at the time. The hour so longed-for strikes at last, and when we are at her door ready to knock — we would be glad not to find her in. It is only on reflexion that we would be sorry for it. In a word, the suspense before seeing her produces an unpleasant effect.

There you have one of the things which make good folk say that love drives men silly.

The reason is that the imagination, violently withdrawn from dreams of delight in which every step forward brings happiness, is brought back face to face with severe reality.

The gentle soul knows well that in the combat which is to begin the moment he sees her, the least inadvertency, the least lack of attention or of courage will be paid for by a defeat, poisoning, for a long time to come, the dreams of fancy and of passion, and humiliating to a man’s pride, if he try to find consolation outside the sphere of passion. He says to himself: “I hadn’t the wit, I hadn’t the pluck”; but the only way to have pluck before the loved one is by loving her a little less.

It is a fragment of attention, torn by force with so much trouble from the dreams of crystallisation, which allows the crowd of things to escape us during our first words with the woman we love — things which have no

sense or which have a sense contrary to what we mean — or else, what is still more heartrending, we exaggerate our feelings and they become ridiculous in our own eyes. We feel vaguely that we are not paying enough attention to our words and mechanically set about polishing and loading our oratory. And, also, it is impossible to hold one's tongue — silence would be embarrassing and make it still less possible to give one's thoughts to her. So we say in a feeling way a host of things that we do not feel, and would be quite embarrassed to repeat, obstinately keeping our distance from the woman before us, in order more really to be with her. In the early hours of my acquaintance with love, this oddity which I felt within me, made me believe that I did not love.

I understand cowardice and how recruits, to be delivered of their fear, throw themselves recklessly into the midst of the fire. The number of silly things I have said in the last two years, in order not to hold my tongue, makes me mad when I think of them.

And that is what should easily mark in a woman's eyes the difference between passion-love and gallantry, between the gentle soul and the prosaic.

In these decisive moments the one gains as much as the other loses: the prosaic soul gets just the degree of warmth which he ordinarily wants, while excess of feeling drives mad the poor gentle heart, who, to crown his troubles, really means to hide his madness. Completely taken up with keeping his own transports in check, he is miles away from the self-possession necessary in order to seize opportunities, and leaves in a muddle after a visit, in which the prosaic soul would have made a great step forward. Directly it is a question of advancing his too violent passion, a gentle being with pride cannot be eloquent under the eye of the woman whom he loves: the pain of ill-success is too much for him. The vulgar being, on the contrary, calculates nicely the chances of success: he is stopped by no foretastes of the suffering of defeat, and, proud of that which makes him vulgar, laughs at the gentle soul, who, with all the cleverness he may have, is never quite enough at ease to say the simplest things and those most certain to succeed. The gentle soul, far from being able to grasp anything by force, must resign himself to obtaining nothing except through the charity of her whom he loves. If the woman one loves really has feelings, one always has reason to regret having wished to put pressure on oneself in order to make love to her.

One looks shamefaced, looks chilly, would look deceitful, did not passion betray itself by other and surer signs. To express what we feel so keenly, and in such detail, at every moment of the day, is a task we take upon our shoulders because we have read novels; for if we were natural, we would never undertake anything so irksome. Instead of wanting to speak of what we felt a quarter of an hour ago, and of trying to make of it a general and interesting topic, we would express simply the passing fragment of our feelings at the moment. But no! we put the most violent pressure upon ourselves for a worthless success, and, as there is no evidence of actual sensation to back our words, and as our memory cannot be working freely, we approve at the time of things to say — and say them — comical to a degree that is more than humiliating.

When at last, after an hour's trouble, this extremely painful effort has resulted in getting away from the enchanted gardens of the imagination, in order to enjoy quite simply the presence of what you love, it often happens — that you've got to take your leave.

All this looks like extravagance, but I have seen better still. A woman, whom one of my friends loved to idolatry, pretending to take offence at some or other want of delicacy, which I was never allowed to learn, condemned him all of a sudden to see her only twice a month. These visits, so rare and so intensely desired, meant an attack of madness, and it wanted all Salviati's strength of character to keep it from being seen by outward signs.

From the very first, the idea of the visit's end is too insistent for one to be able to take pleasure in the visit. One speaks a great deal, deaf to one's own thoughts, saying often the contrary of what one thinks. One embarks upon discourses which have got suddenly to be cut short, because of their absurdity — if one manage to rouse oneself and listen to one's thoughts within. The effort we make is so violent that we seem chilly. Love hides itself in its excess.

Away from her, the imagination was lulled by the most charming dialogues: there were transports the most tender and the most touching. And thus for ten days or so you think you have the courage to speak; but two days before what should have been our day of happiness, the fever begins, and, as the terrible instant draws near, its force redoubles.

Just as you come into her salon, in order not to do or say some incredible piece of nonsense, you clutch in despair at the resolution of keeping your mouth shut and your eyes on her — in order at least to be able to remember her face. Scarcely before her, something like a kind of drunkenness comes over your eyes; you feel driven like a maniac to do strange actions; it is as if you had two souls — one to act and the other to blame your actions. You feel, in a confused way, that to turn your strained attention to folly would temporarily refresh the blood, and make you lose from sight the end of the visit and the misery of parting for a fortnight.

If some bore be there, who tells a pointless story, the poor lover, in his inexplicable madness, as if he were nervous of losing moments so rare, becomes all attention. That hour, of which he drew himself so sweet a picture, passes like a flash of lightning and yet he feels, with unspeakable bitterness, all the little circumstances which show how much a stranger he has become to her whom he loves. There he is in the midst of indifferent visitors and sees himself the only one who does not know her life of these past days, in all its details. At last he goes: and as he coldly says good-bye, he has the agonising feeling of two whole weeks before another meeting. Without a doubt he would suffer less never to see the object of his love again. It is in the style, only far blacker, of the Duc de Policastro, who every six months travelled a hundred leagues to see for a quarter of an hour at Lecce a beloved mistress guarded by a jealous husband.

Here you can see clearly Will without influence upon Love.

Out of all patience with one's mistress and oneself, how furious the desire to bury oneself in indifference! The only good of such visits is to replenish the treasure of crystallisation.

Life for Salviati was divided into periods of two weeks, which took their colour from the last evening he had been allowed to see Madame — . For example, he was in the seventh heaven of delight the 21st of May, and the 2nd of June he kept away from home, for fear of yielding to the temptation of blowing out his brains.

I saw that evening how badly novelists have drawn the moment of suicide. Salviati simply said to me: "I'm thirsty, I must take this glass of water." I did

not oppose his resolution, but said good-bye: then he broke down.'

Seeing the obscurity which envelops the discourse of lovers, it would not be prudent to push too far conclusions drawn from an isolated detail of their conversation. They give a fair glimpse of their feelings only in sudden expressions — then it is the cry of the heart. Otherwise it is from the complexion of the bulk of what is said that inductions are to be drawn. And we must remember that quite often a man, who is very moved, has no time to notice the emotion of the person who is the cause of his own.

CHAPTER XXV

THE INTRODUCTION

TO see the subtlety and sureness of judgment with which women grasp certain details, I am lost in admiration: but a moment later, I see them praise a blockhead to the skies, let themselves be moved to tears by a piece of insipidity, or weigh gravely a fatuous affectation, as if it were a telling characteristic. I cannot conceive such simplicity. There must be some general law in all this, unknown to me.

Attentive to one merit in a man and absorbed by one detail, women feel it deeply and have no eyes for the rest. All the nervous fluid is used up in the enjoyment of this quality: there is none left to see the others.

I have seen the most remarkable men introduced to very clever women; it was always a particle of bias which decided the effect of the first inspection.

If I may be allowed a familiar detail, I shall tell the story how charming Colonel L. B — was to be introduced to Madame de Struve of Koenigsberg — she a most distinguished woman. “Farà colpo P” — we asked each other; and a wager was made as a result. I go up to Madame de Struve, and tell her the Colonel wears his ties two days running — the second he turns them — she could notice on his tie the creases downwards. Nothing more palpably untrue!

As I finish, the dear fellow is announced. The silliest little Parisian would have made more effect. Observe that Madame de Struve was one who could love. She is also a respectable woman and there could have been no question of gallantry between them.

Never were two characters more made for each other. People blamed Madame de Struve for being romantic, and there was nothing could touch L.

B. but virtue carried to the point of the romantic. Thanks to her, he had a bullet put through him quite young.

It has been given to women admirably to feel the fine shades of affection, the most imperceptible variations of the human heart, the lightest movements of susceptibility.

In this regard they have an organ which in us is missing: watch them nurse the wounded.

But, perhaps, they are equally unable to see what mind consists in — as a moral composition. I have seen the most distinguished women charmed with a clever man, who was not myself, and, at the same time and almost with the same word, admire the biggest fools. I felt caught like a connoisseur, who sees the loveliest diamonds taken for paste, and paste preferred for being more massive.

And so I concluded that with women you have to risk everything. Where General Lassale came to grief, a captain with moustaches and heavy oaths succeeded. There is surely a whole side in men's merit which escapes them. For myself, I always come back to physical laws. The nervous fluid spends itself in men through the brain and in women through the heart: that is why they are more sensitive. Some great and obligatory work, within the profession we have followed all our life, is our consolation, but for them nothing can console but distraction.

Appiani, who only believes in virtue as a last resort, and with whom this evening I went routing out ideas (exposing meanwhile those of this chapter) answered: —

"The force of soul, which Eponina used with heroic devotion, to keep alive her husband in a cavern underground and to keep him from sinking into despair, would have helped her to hide from him a lover, if they had lived at Rome in peace. Strong souls must have their nourishment."

CHAPTER XXVI

OF MODESTY

IN Madagascar, a woman exposes without a thought what is here most carefully hidden, but would die of shame sooner than show her arm. Clearly three-quarters of modesty come from example. It is perhaps the one law, daughter of civilisation, which produces only happiness.

People have noticed that birds of prey hide themselves to drink; the reason being that, obliged to plunge their head in the water, they are at that moment defenceless. After consideration of what happens at Tahiti, I see no other natural basis for modesty.

Love is the miracle of civilisation. There is nothing but a physical love of the coarsest kind among savage or too barbarian peoples.

And modesty gives love the help of imagination — that is, gives it life.

Modesty is taught little girls very early by their mothers with such jealous care, that it almost looks like fellow-feeling; in this way women take measures in good time for the happiness of the lover to come.

There can be nothing worse for a timid, sensitive woman than the torture of having, in the presence of a man, allowed herself something for which she thinks she ought to blush; I am convinced that a woman with a little pride would sooner face a thousand deaths. A slight liberty, which touches a soft, corner in the lover’s heart, gives her a moment of lively pleasure. If he seem to blame it, or simply not to enjoy it to the utmost, it must leave in the soul an agonising doubt. And so a woman above the common sort has everything to gain by being very reserved in her manner. The game is not fair: against the chance of a little pleasure or the advantage of seeming a little more lovable, a woman runs the risk of a burning remorse and a sense of shame,

which must make even the lover less dear. An evening gaily passed, in care-devil thoughtless fashion, is dearly paid for at the price. If a woman fears she has made this kind of mistake before her lover, he must become for days together hateful in her sight. Can one wonder at the force of a habit, when the lightest infractions of it are punished by such cruel shame?

As for the utility of modesty — she is the mother of love: impossible, therefore, to doubt her claims. And for the mechanism of the sentiment — it's simple enough. The soul is busy feeling shame instead of busy desiring. You deny yourself desires and your desires lead to actions.

Evidently every woman of feeling and pride — and, these two things being cause and effect, one can hardly go without the other — must fall into ways of coldness, which the people whom they disconcert call prudery.

The accusation is all the more specious because of the extreme difficulty of steering a middle course: a woman has only to have little judgment and a lot of pride, and very soon she will come to believe that in modesty one cannot go too far. In this way, an Englishwoman takes it as an insult, if you pronounce before her the name of certain garments. An Englishwoman must be very careful, in the country, not to be seen in the evening leaving the drawing-room with her husband; and, what is still more serious, she thinks it an outrage to modesty, to show that she is enjoying herself a little in the presence of anyone but her husband. It is perhaps due to such studied scrupulousness that the English, a people of judgment, betray signs of such boredom in their domestic bliss. Theirs the fault — why so much pride?

To make up for this — and to pass straight from Plymouth to Cadiz and Seville — I found in Spain that the warmth of climate and passions caused people to overlook a little the necessary measure of restraint. The very tender caresses, which I noticed could be given in public, far from seeming touching, inspired me with feelings quite the reverse: nothing is more distressing.

We must expect to find incalculable the force of habits, which insinuate themselves into women under the pretext of modesty. A common woman, by carrying modesty to extremes, feels she is getting on a level with a woman of distinction.

Such is the empire of modesty, that a woman of feeling betrays her sentiments for her lover sooner by deed than by word.

The prettiest, richest and most easy-going woman of Bologna has just told me, how yesterday evening a fool of a Frenchman, who is here giving people a strange idea of his nation, thought good to hide under her bed. Apparently he did not want to waste the long string of absurd declarations, with which he has been pestering her for month. But the great man should have had more presence of mind. He waited all right till Madame M — sent away her maid and had got to bed, but he had not the patience to give the household time to go to sleep. She seized hold of the bell and had him thrown out ignominiously, in the midst of the jeers and cuffs of five or six lackeys. "And if he had waited two hours?" I asked her. "I should have been very badly off. 'Who is to doubt,' he would have said, 'that I am here by your orders?'"

After leaving this pretty woman's house, I went to see a woman more worthy of being loved than any I know. Her extremely delicate nature is something greater, if possible, than her touching beauty. I found her alone, told the story of Madame M — and we discussed it.

"Listen," was what she said; "if the man, who will go as far as that, was lovable in the eyes of that woman beforehand, he'll have her pardon, and, all in good time, her love." I own I was dumbfounded by this unexpected light thrown on the recesses of the human heart. After a short silence I answered her—" But will a man, who loves, dare go to such violent extremities?"

There would be far less vagueness in this chapter had a woman written it. Everything relating to women's haughtiness or pride, to their habits of modesty and its excesses, to certain delicacies, for the most part dependent wholly on associations of feelings, which cannot exist for men, and often delicacies not founded on Nature — all these things, I say, can only find their way here so far as it is permissible to write from hearsay.

A woman once said to me, in a moment of philosophical frankness, something which amounts to this: —

"If ever I sacrificed my liberty, the man whom I should happen to favour would appreciate still more my affection, by seeing how sparing I had

always been of favours — even of the slightest." It is out of preference for this lover, whom perhaps she will never meet, that a lovable woman will offer a cold reception to the man who is speaking to her at the moment. That is the first exaggeration of modesty; that one can respect. The second comes from women's pride. The third source of exaggeration is the pride of husbands.

To my idea, this possibility of love presents itself often to the fancy of even the most virtuous woman — and why not? Not to love, when given by Heaven a soul made for love, is to deprive yourself and others of a great blessing. It is like an orange-tree, which would not flower for fear of committing a sin. And beyond doubt a soul made for love can partake fervently of no other bliss. In the would-be pleasures of the world it finds, already at the second trial, an intolerable emptiness. Often it fancies that it loves Art and Nature in its grander aspects, but ail they do for it is to hold out hopes of love and magnify it, if that is possible; until, very soon, it finds out that they speak of a happiness which it is resolved to forego.

The only thing I see to blame in modesty is that it leads to untruthfulness, and that is the only point of vantage, which light women have over women of feeling. A light woman says to you: "As soon, my friend, as you attract me, I'll tell you and I'll be more delighted than you; because I have a great respect for you."

The lively satisfaction of Constance's cry after her love's victory! "How happy I am, not to have given myself to anyone, all these eight years that I've been on bad terms with my husband!"

However comical I find the line of thought, this joy seems to me full of freshness.

Here I absolutely must talk about the sort of regrets, felt by a certain lady of Seville who had been deserted by her lover. I ought to remind the reader that, in love, everything is a sign, and, above all, crave the benefit of a little indulgence for my style.

As a man, I think my eye can distinguish nine points in modesty.

1. Much is staked against little; hence extreme reserve; hence often affectation. For example, one doesn't laugh at what amuses one the most. Hence it needs a great deal of judgment to have just the right amount of modesty. That is why many women have not enough in intimate gatherings, or, to put it more exactly, do not insist on the stories told them being sufficiently disguised, and only drop their veils according to the degree of their intoxication or recklessness.

Could it be an effect of modesty and of the deadly dullness it must impose on many women, that the majority of them respect nothing in a man so much as impudence? Or do they take impudence for character?

2. Second law: "My lover will think the more of me for it."

3. Force of habit has its way, even at the moments of greatest passion.

4. To the lover, modesty offers very flattering pleasures; it makes him feel what laws are broken for his sake.

5. And to women it offers more intoxicating pleasures, which, causing the fall of a strongly established habit, throw the soul into greater confusion. The Comte de Valmont finds himself in a pretty woman's bedroom at midnight. The thing happens every week to him; to her perhaps every other year. Thus continence and modesty must have pleasures infinitely more lively in store for women.

6. The drawback of modesty is that it is always leading to falsehood.

7. Excess of modesty, and its severity, discourages gentle and timid hearts from loving — just those made for giving and feeling the sweets of love.

8. In sensitive women, who have not had several lovers, modesty is a bar to ease of manner, and for this reason they are rather apt to let themselves be led by those friends, who need reproach themselves with no such failing. They go into each particular case, instead of falling back blindly on habit. Delicacy and modesty give their actions a touch of restraint; by being natural they make themselves appear unnatural; but this awkwardness is akin to heavenly grace.

If familiarity in them sometimes resembles tenderness, it is because these angelic souls are coquettes without knowing it. They are disinclined to interrupt their dreams, and, to save themselves the trouble of speaking and finding something both pleasant and polite to say to a friend (which would end in being nothing but polite), they finish by leaning tenderly on his arm.

9. Women only dare be frank by halves; which is the reason why they very rarely reach the highest, when they become authors, but which also gives a grace to their shortest note. For them to be frank means going out without a fichu. For a man nothing more frequent than to write absolutely at the dictate of his imagination, without knowing where he is going.

Résumé

The usual fault is to treat woman as a kind of man, but more generous, more changeable and with whom, above all, no rivalry is possible. It is only too easy to forget that there are two new and peculiar laws, which tyrannise over these unstable beings, in conflict with all the ordinary impulses of human nature — I mean: —

Feminine pride and modesty, and those often inscrutable habits born of modesty.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GLANCE

THIS is the great weapon of virtuous coquetry. With a glance, one may say everything, and yet one can always deny a glance; for it cannot be repeated textually.

This reminds me of Count G — , the Mirabeau of Rome.

The delightful little government of that land has taught him an original way of telling stories by a broken string of words, which say everything — and nothing. He makes his whole meaning clear, but repeat who will his sayings word for word, it is impossible to compromise him. Cardinal Lante told him he had stolen this talent from women — yes, and respectable women, I add. This roguery is a cruel, but just, reprisal on man’s tyranny.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OF FEMININE PRIDE

ALL their lives women hear mention made by men of things claiming importance — large profits, success in war, people killed in duels, fiendish or admirable revenges, and so on. Those of them, whose heart is proud, feel that, being unable to reach these things, they are not in a position to display any pride remarkable for the importance of what it rests on. They feel a heart beat in their breast, superior by the force and pride of its movements to all which surrounds them, and yet they see the meanest of men esteem himself above them. They find out, that all their pride can only be for little things, or at least for things, which are without importance except for sentiment, and of which a third party cannot judge. Maddened by this desolating contrast between the meanness of their fortune and the conscious worth of their soul, they set about making their pride worthy of respect by the intensity of its fits or by the relentless tenacity with which they hold by its dictates. Before intimate intercourse women of this kind imagine, when they see their lover, that he has laid siege to them. Their imagination is absorbed in irritation at his endeavours, which, after all, cannot do otherwise than witness to his love — seeing that he does love. Instead of enjoying the feelings of the man of their preference, their vanity is up in arms against him; and it comes to this, that, with a soul of the tenderest, so long as its sensibility is not centred on a special object, they have only to love, in order, like a common flirt, to be reduced to the barest vanity.

A woman of generous character will sacrifice her life a thousand times for her lover, but will break with him for ever over a question of pride — for the opening or shutting of a door. Therein lies their point of honour. Well! Napoleon came to grief rather than yield a village.

I have seen a quarrel of this kind last longer than a year. It was a woman of the greatest distinction who sacrificed all her happiness, sooner than give her

lover the chance of entertaining the slightest possible doubt of the magnanimity of her pride. The reconciliation was the work of chance, and, on my friend's side, due to a moment of weakness, which, on meeting her lover, she was unable to overcome. She imagined him forty miles away, and found him in a place, where certainly he did not expect to see her. She could not hide the first transports of delight; her lover was more overcome than she; they almost fell at each other's feet and never have I seen tears flow so abundantly — it was the unlooked-for appearance of happiness. Tears are the supreme smile.

The Duke of Argyll gave a fine example of presence of mind, in not drawing Feminine Pride into a combat, in the interview he had at Richmond with Queen Caroline. The more nobility in a woman's character, the more terrible are these storms —

As the blackest sky Foretells the heaviest tempest.

(Don Juan.)

Can it be that the more fervently, in the normal course of life, a woman delights in the rare qualities of her lover, the more she tries, in those cruel moments, when sympathy seems turned to the reverse, to wreak her vengeance on what usually she sees in him superior to other people? She is afraid of being confounded with them.

It is a precious long time since I read that boring Clarissa; but I think it is through feminine pride that she lets herself die, and does not accept the hand of Lovelace.

Lovelace's fault was great; but as she did love him a little, she could have found pardon in her heart for a crime, of which the cause was love.

Monime, on the contrary, seems to me a touching model of feminine delicacy. What cheek does not blush with pleasure to hear from the lips of an actress worthy of the part: —

That fatal love which I had crushed and conquered,

Your wiles detected, and I cannot now

Disown what I confess'd; you cannot raze

Its memory; the shame of that avowal, —

To which you forced me, will abide for ever

Present before my mind, and I should think

That you were always of my faith uncertain.

The grave itself to me were less abhorrent

Than marriage bed shared with a spouse, who took

Cruel advantage of my simple trust,

And, to destroy my peace for ever, fann'd

A flame that fired my cheek for other love

Than his.

I can picture to myself future generations saying:

"So that's what Monarchy was good for — to produce that sort of character and their portrayal by great artists."

And yet I find an admirable example of this delicacy even in the republics of the Middle Ages; which seems to destroy my system of the influence of governments on the passions, but which I shall cite in good faith.

The reference is to those very touching verses of Dante:

Deh! quando tu sarai tornato al mondo

Ricordati di me, che son la Pia;

Siena mi fè; disfecemi Maremma;

Saisi colui, che inanellata pria

Disposando, m'avea con la sua gemma.

Purgatorio, Cant. V.

The woman, who speaks with so much restraint, had suffered in secret the fate of Desdemona, and, by a word, could make known her husband's crime to the friends, whom she had left on earth.

Nello della Pietra won the hand of Madonna Pia (14), sole heiress of the Tolomei, the richest and noblest family of Sienna. Her beauty, which was the admiration of Tuscany, sowed in her husband's heart the seed of jealousy, which, envenomed by false reports and suspicions ever and anon rekindled, led him to a heinous project. It is difficult, at this hour, to decide whether his wife was altogether innocent, but Dante represents her as such.

Her husband carried her off into the fens of Volterra, famous then, as now, for the effects of the aria cattiva. Never would he tell his unhappy wife the reason of her exile in so dangerous a place. His pride did not deign to utter complaint or accusation. He lived alone with her in a deserted tower, the ruins of which by the edge of the sea I have been myself to visit. There he never broke his scornful silence, never answered his young wife's questions, never listened to her prayers. Coldly he waited at her side for the pestilential air to have its effect. The exhalations of these morasses were not long in withering those features — the loveliest, it is said, which, in that century, the world had seen. In a few months she died. Some chroniclers of those remote times report that Nello used the dagger to hasten her end. She died in the fens in some horrible way; but the kind of death was a mystery even to her

contemporaries. Nello della Pietra survived to pass the rest of his days in a silence which he never broke.

Nothing nobler and more delicate than the way in which young la Pia addresses Dante. She wishes to be recalled to the memory of the friends, whom she had left on earth so young; and yet, telling who she is and giving the name of her husband, she will not allow herself the slightest complaint against a piece of cruelty unheard of, but for the future irreparable; she only points out that he knows the story of her death.

This constancy in pride's revenge is not met, I think, except in the countries of the South.

In Piedmont I happened to be the involuntary witness of something very nearly parallel; though at the time I did not know the details. I was sent with twenty-five dragoons into the woods along the Sesia, to intercept contraband. Arriving in the evening at this wild and desolate spot, I caught sight between the trees of the ruins of an old castle. I went up to it and to my great surprise — it was inhabited. I found within a nobleman of the country, of sinister appearance, a man six foot high and forty years old. He gave me two rooms with a bad grace. I passed my time playing music with my quartermaster; after some days, we discovered that our friend kept a woman in the background, whom we used to call Camille, laughingly; but we were far from suspecting the fearful truth. Six weeks later she was dead. I had the morbid curiosity to see her in the coffin, paying a monk, who was watching, to introduce me into the chapel towards midnight, under pretext of going to sprinkle holy water. There I found one of those superb faces, which are beautiful even in the arms of death; she had a large aquiline nose — the nobility and delicacy of its outline I shall never forget. Then I left that deadly spot. Five years later, a detachment of my regiment accompanying the Emperor to his coronation as King of Italy (15), I had the whole story told me. I learnt that the jealous husband, Count, had found one morning fastened to his wife's bed an English watch, belonging to a young man of the small town in which they lived. That very day he carried her off to the ruined castle in the midst of the woods of the Sesia. Like Nello della Pietra, he never uttered a single word. If she made him any request, he coldly and silently presented to her the English watch, which he carried always with him. Almost three years passed, spent thus alone with her. At last she died of

despair, in the flower of life. Her husband tried to put a knife into the proprietor of the watch, missed him, passed on to Genoa, took ship and no one has heard of him since. His property has been divided.

As for these women with feminine pride, if you take their injuries with a good grace, which the habits of a military life make easy, you annoy these proud souls; they take you for a coward, and very soon become outrageous. Such lofty characters yield with pleasure to men whom they see overbearing with other men. That is, I fancy, the only way — you must often pick a quarrel with your neighbour in order to avoid one with your mistress.

One day Miss Cornel, the celebrated London actress, was surprised by the unexpected appearance of the rich colonel, whom she found useful. She happened to be with a little lover, whom she just liked — and nothing more. "Mr. So-and-so," says she in great confusion to the colonel, "has come to see the pony I want to sell."

"I am here for something very different," put in proudly the little lover who was beginning to bore her, but whom, from the moment of that answer, she started to love again madly. Women of that kind sympathise with their lover's haughtiness, instead of exercising at his expense their own disposition to pride.

The character of the Duc de Lauzun (that of 1660), if they can forgive the first day its want of grace, is very fascinating for such women, and perhaps for all women of distinction. Grandeur on a higher plane escapes them; they take for coldness the calm gaze which nothing escapes, but which a detail never disturbs. Have I not heard women at the Court of Saint-Cloud maintain that Napoleon had a dry and prosaic character? A great man is like an eagle: the higher he rises the less he is visible, and he is punished for his greatness by the solitude of his soul.

From feminine pride arises what women call want of refinement. I fancy, it is not at all unlike what kings call lèse majesté, a crime all the more dangerous, because one slips into it without knowing. The tenderest lover may be accused of wanting refinement, if he is not very sharp, or, what is sadder, if he dares give himself up to the greatest charm of love — the

delight of being perfectly natural with the loved one and of not listening to what he is told.

These are the sort of things, of which a well-born heart could have no inkling; one must have experience, in order to believe in them; for we are misled by the habit of dealing justly and frankly with our men friends.

It is necessary to keep in mind incessantly that we have to do with beings, who can, however wrongly, think themselves inferior in vigour of character, or, to put it better, can think that others believe they are inferior.

Should not a woman's true pride reside in the power of the feeling she inspires? A maid of honour to the queen and wife of Francis I was chaffed about the fickleness of her lover, who, it was said, did not really love her. A little time after, this lover had an illness and reappeared at Court — dumb. Two years later, people showing surprise one day that she still loved him, she turned to him, saying: "Speak." And he spoke.

CHAPTER XXIX

OF WOMEN'S COURAGE

I tell thee, proud Templar, that not in thy fiercest battles hast thou displayed more of thy vaunted courage than has been shewn by women, when called upon to suffer by affection or duty. (Ivanhoe.)

I REMEMBER meeting the following phrase in a book of history: "All the men lost their head: that is the moment when women display an incontestable superiority."

Their courage has a reserve which that of their lover wants; he acts as a spur to their sense of worth. They find so much pleasure in being able, in the fire of danger, to dispute the first place for firmness with the man, who often wounds them by the proudness of his protection and his strength, that the vehemence of that enjoyment raises them above any kind of fear, which at the moment is the man's weak point. A man, too, if the same help were given him at the same moment, would show himself superior to everything; for fear never resides in the danger, but in ourselves.

Not that I mean to depreciate women's courage — I have seen them, on occasions, superior to the bravest men. Only they must have a man to love. Then they no longer feel except through him; and so the most obvious and personal danger becomes, as it were, a rose to gather in his presence.

I have found also in women, who did not love, intre-

pidity, the coldest, the most surprising and the most exempt from nerves.

It is true, I have always imagined that they are so brave, only because they do not know the tiresomeness of wounds!

As for moral courage, so far superior to the other, the firmness of a woman who resists her love is simply the most admirable thing, which can exist on earth. All other possible marks of courage are as nothing compared to a thing so strongly opposed to nature and so arduous. Perhaps they find a source of strength in the habit of sacrifice, which is bred in them by modesty.

Hard on women it is that the proofs of this courage should always remain secret and be almost impossible to divulge.

Still harder that it should always be employed against their own happiness: the Princesse de Clèves would have done better to say nothing to her husband and give herself to M. de Nemours.

Perhaps women are chiefly supported by their pride in making a fine defence, and imagine that their lover is staking his vanity on having them — a petty and miserable idea. A man of passion, who throws himself with a light heart into so many ridiculous situations, must have a lot of time to be thinking of vanity! It is like the monks who mean to catch the devil and find their reward in the pride of hair-shirts and macerations.

I should think that Madame de Clèves would have repented, had she come to old age, — to the period at which one judges life and when the joys of pride appear in all their meanness. She would have wished to have lived like Madame de la Fayette.

I have just re-read a hundred pages of this essay: and a pretty poor idea I have given of true love, of love which occupies the entire soul, fills it with fancies, now the happiest, now heart-breaking — but always sublime — and makes it completely insensible to all the rest of creation. I am at a loss to express what I see so well; I have never felt more painfully the want of talent. How bring into relief the simplicity of action and of character, the high seriousness, the glance that reflects so truly and so ingenuously the passing shade of feeling, and above all, to return to it again, that inexpressible What care I? for all that is not the woman we love? A yes or a no spoken by a man in love has an unction which is not to be found elsewhere, and is not found in that very man at other times. This morning (August 3rd) I passed on horseback about nine o’clock in front of the lovely English garden of Marchese Zampieri, situated on the last crests of those

tree-capped hills, on which Bologna rests, and from which so fine a view is enjoyed over Lombardy rich and green — the fairest country in the world. In a copse of laurels, belonging to the Giardino Zampieri, which dominates the path I was taking, leading to the cascade of the Reno at Casa Lecchio, I saw Count Delfante. He was absorbed in thought and scarcely returned my greeting, though we had passed the night together till two o'clock in the morning. I went to the cascade, I crossed the Reno; after which, passing again, at least three hours later, under the copse of the Giardino Zampieri, I saw him still there. He was precisely in the same position, leaning against a great pine, which rises above the copse of laurels — but this detail I am afraid will be found too simple and pointless. He came up to me with tears in his eyes, asking me not to go telling people of his trance. I was touched, and suggested retracing my steps and going with him to spend the day in the country. At the end of two hours he had told me everything. His is a fine soul, but oh! the coldness of these pages, compared to his story.

Furthermore, he thinks his love is not returned — which is not my opinion. In the fair marble face of the Contessa Ghigi, with whom we spent the evening, one can read nothing. Only now and then a light and sudden blush, which she cannot check, just betrays the emotions of that soul, which the most exalted feminine pride disputes with deeper emotions. You see the colour spread over her neck of alabaster and as much as one catches of those lovely shoulders, worthy of Canova. She somehow finds a way of diverting her black and sombre eyes from the observation of those, whose penetration alarms her woman's delicacy; but last night, at something which Delfante was saying and of which she disapproved, I saw a sudden blush spread all over her. Her lofty soul found him less worthy of her.

But when all is said, even if I were mistaken in my conjectures on the happiness of Delfante, vanity apart, I think him happier than I, in my indifference, although I am in a thoroughly happy position, in appearance and in reality.

Bologna, August 3rd, 1818.

CHAPTER XXX

A PECULIAR AND MOURNFUL SPECTACLE

WOMEN with their feminine pride visit the iniquities of the fools upon the men of sense, and those of the prosaic, prosperous and brutal upon the noble-minded. A very pretty result — you'll agree!

The petty considerations of pride and worldly proprieties are the cause of many women's unhappiness, for, through pride, their parents have placed them in their abominable position. Destiny has reserved for them, as a consolation far superior to all their misfortunes, the happiness of loving and being loved with passion, when suddenly one fine day they borrow from the enemy this same mad pride, of which they were the first victims — all to kill the one happiness which is left them, to work their own misfortune and the misfortune of him, who loves them. A friend, who has had ten famous intrigues (and by no means all one after another), gravely persuades them that if they fall in love, they will be dishonoured in the eyes of the public, and yet this worthy public, who never rises above low ideas, gives them generously a lover a year; because that, it says, "is the thing." Thus the soul is saddened by this odd spectacle: a woman of feeling, supremely refined and an angel of purity, on the advice of a low t — , runs away from the boundless, the only happiness which is left to her, in order to appear in a dress of dazzling white, before a great fat brute of a judge, whom everyone knows has been blind a hundred years, and who bawls out at the top of his voice: "She is dressed in black!"

CHAPTER XXXI

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF SALVIATI Ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.

(Propertius, II, 1.)

Bologna, April 29th, 1818.

Driven to despair by the misfortune to which love has reduced me, I curse existence. I have no heart for anything. The weather is dull; it is raining, and a late spell of cold has come again to sadden nature, who after a long winter was hurrying to meet the spring.

Schiassetti, a half-pay colonel, my cold and reasonable friend, come to spend a couple of hours with me.

“You should renounce your love.”

“How? Give me back my passion for war.”

“It is a great misfortune for you to have known her.” I agree very nearly — so low-spirited and craven do I feel — so much has melancholy taken possession of me to-day. We discuss what interest can have led her friend to libel me, but find nothing but that old Neapolitan proverb: “Woman, whom love and youth desert, a nothing piques.” What is certain is that that cruel woman is enraged with me — it is the expression of one of her friends. I could revenge myself in a fearful way, but, against her hatred, I am without the smallest means of defence. Schiassetti leaves me. I go out into the rain, not knowing what to do with myself. My rooms, this drawing-room, which I lived in during the first days of our acquaintance, and when I saw her every evening, have become insupportable to me. Each engraving, each piece of furniture, brings up again the happiness I dreamed of in their presence — which now I have lost for ever.

I tramped the streets through a cold rain: chance, if I can call it chance, made me pass under her windows. Night was falling and I went along, my eyes full of tears fixed on the window of her room. Suddenly the curtains were just drawn aside, as if to give a glimpse into the square, then instantly closed again. I felt within me a physical movement about the heart. I was unable to support myself and took refuge under the gateway of the next house. A thousand feelings crowd upon my soul. Chance may have produced this movement of the curtains; but oh! if it was her hand that had drawn them aside.

There are two misfortunes in the world: passion frustrated and the "dead blank."

In love — I feel that two steps away from me exists a boundless happiness, something beyond all my prayers, which depends upon nothing but a word, nothing but a smile.

Passionless like Schiassetti, on gloomy days I see happiness nowhere, I come to doubt if it exists for me, I fall into depression. One ought to be without strong passions and have only a little curiosity or vanity.

It is two o'clock in the morning; I have seen that little movement of the curtain; at six o'clock I paid some calls and went to the play, but everywhere, silent and dreaming, I passed the evening examining this question: "After so much anger with so little foundation (for after all did I wish to offend her and is there a thing on earth which the intention does not excuse?) — has she felt a moment of love?"

Poor Salviati, who wrote the preceding lines on his Petrarch, died a short time after. He was the intimate friend of Schiassetti and myself; we knew all his thoughts, and it is from him that I have all the tearful part of this essay. He was imprudence incarnate; moreover, the woman, for whom he went to such wild lengths, is the most interesting creature that I have met. Schiassetti said to me: "But do you think that that unfortunate passion was without advantages for Salviati? To begin with, the most worrying of money troubles that can be imagined came upon him. These troubles, which reduced him to a very middling fortune after his dazzling youth, and would have driven him

mad with anger in any other circumstances, crossed his mind not once in two weeks.

“And then — a matter of importance of a quite different kind for a mind of his range — that passion is the first true course of logic, which he ever had. That may seem peculiar in a man who has been at Court; but the fact is explained by his extreme courage. For example, he passed without winking the day of — , the day of his undoing; he was surprised then, as in Russia (16), not to feel anything extraordinary. It is an actual fact, that his fear of anything had never gone so far as to make him think about it for two days together. Instead of this callousness, the last two years he was trying every minute to be brave. Before he had never seen danger.

“When as a result of his imprudence and his faith in the generosity of critics, he had managed to get condemned to not seeing the woman he was in love with, except twice a month, we would see him pass those evenings, talking to her as if intoxicated with joy, because he had been received with that noble frankness which he worshipped. He held that Madame — and he were two souls without their like, who should understand each other with a glance. It was beyond him to grasp that she should pay the least attention to petty bourgeois comments, which tried to make a criminal of him. The result of this fine confidence in a woman, surrounded by his enemies, was to find her door closed to him.

“‘With M — ,’ I used to say to him, ‘you forget your maxim — that you mustn’t believe in greatness of soul, except in the last extremity.’

“‘Do you think,’ he answered, ‘that the world contains another heart which is more suited to hers? True, I pay for this passionate way of being, which Léonore, in anger, made me see on the horizon in the line of the rocks of Poligny, with the ruin of all the practical enterprises of my life — a disaster which comes from my lack of patient industry and imprudence due to the force of momentary impressions.’” One can see the touch of madness!

For Salviati life was divided into periods of a fortnight, which took their hue from the last interview, which he had been granted. But I noticed often, that the happiness he owed to a welcome, which he thought less cold, was far inferior in intensity to the unhappiness with which a hard reception

overwhelmed him. At times Madame — failed to be quite honest with him; and these are the only two criticisms I ever dared offer him. Beyond the more intimate side of his sorrow, of which he had the delicacy never to speak even to the friends dearest to him and most devoid of envy, he saw in a hard reception from Léonore the triumph of prosaic and scheming beings over the open-hearted and the generous. At those times he lost faith in virtue and, above all, in glory. It was his way to talk to his friends only of sad notions, to which it is true his passion led up, but notions capable besides of having some interest in the eyes of philosophy. I was curious to observe that uncommon soul. Ordinarily passion-love is found in people, a little simple in the German way. Salviati, on the contrary, was among the firmest and sharpest men I have known.

I seemed to notice that, after these cruel visits, he had no peace until he had found a justification for Léonore's severities. So long as he felt that she might have been wrong in ill-using him, he was unhappy. Love, so devoid of vanity, I should never have thought possible.

He was incessantly singing us the praises of love.

"If a supernatural power said to me: Break the glass of that watch and Léonore will be for you, what she was three years ago, an indifferent friend — really I believe I would never as long as I live have the courage to break it." I saw in these discourses such signs of madness, that I never had the courage to offer my former objections.

He would add: "Just as Luther's Reformation at the end of the Middle Ages, shaking society to its base, renewed and reconstructed the world on reasonable foundations, so is a generous character renewed and retempered by love.

"It is only then, that he casts off all the baubles of life; without this revolution he would always have had in him a pompous and theatrical something. It is only since I began to love that I have learnt to put greatness into my character — such is the absurdity of education at our military academy.

“Although I behaved well, I was a child at the Court of Napoleon and at Moscow. I did my duty, but I knew nothing of that heroic simplicity, the fruit of entire and whole-hearted sacrifice. For example, it is only this last year, that my heart takes in the simplicity of the Romans in Livy. Once upon a time, I thought them cold compared to our brilliant colonels. What they did for their Rome, I find in my heart for Léonore. If I had the luck to be able to do anything for her, my first desire would be to hide it. The conduct of a Regulus or a Decius was something confirmed beforehand, which had no claim to surprise them. Before I loved, I was small, precisely because I was tempted sometimes to think myself great; I felt a certain effort, for which I applauded myself.

“And, on the side of affection, what do we not owe to love? After the hazards of early youth, the heart is closed to sympathy. Death and absence remove our early companions, and we are reduced to passing our life with lukewarm partners, measure in hand, for ever calculating ideas of interest and vanity. Little by little all the sensitive and generous region of the soul becomes waste, for want of cultivation, and at less than thirty a man finds his heart steeled to all sweet and gentle sensations. In the midst of this arid desert, love causes a well of feelings to spring up, fresher and more abundant even than that of earliest youth. In those days it was a vague hope, irresponsible and incessantly distracted — no devotion to one thing, no deep and constant desire; the soul, at all times light, was athirst for novelty and forgot to-day its adoration of the day before. But, than the crystallisation of love nothing is more concentrated, more mysterious, more eternally single in its object. In those days only agreeable things claimed to please and to please for an instant: now we are deeply touched by everything which is connected with the loved one — even by objects the most indifferent. Arriving at a great town, a hundred miles from that which Léonore lives in, I was in a state of fear and trembling; at each street corner I shuddered to meet Alviza, the intimate friend of Madame — , although I did not know her. For me everything took a mysterious and sacred tint. My heart beat fast, while talking to an old scholar; for I could not hear without blushing the name of the city gate, near which the friend of Léonore lives.

“Even the severities of the woman we love have an infinite grace, which the most flattering moments in the company of other women cannot offer. It is like the great shadows in Correggio’s pictures, which far from being, as in

other painters, passages less pleasant, but necessary in order to give effect to the lights and relief to the figures, have graces of their own which charm and throw us into a gentle reverie.

“Yes, half and the fairest half of life is hidden from the man, who has not loved with passion.”

Salviati had need of the whole force of his dialectic powers, to hold his own against the wise Schiassetti, who was always saying to him: “You want to be happy, then be content with a life exempt from pains and with a small quantity of happiness every day. Keep yourself from the lottery of great passions.”

“Then give me your curiosity,” was Salviati’s answer.

I imagine there were not a few days, when he would have liked to be able to follow the advice of our sensible colonel; he made a little struggle and thought he was succeeding; but this line of action was absolutely beyond his strength. And yet what strength was in that soul!

A white satin hat, a little like that of Madame — , seen in the distance in the street, made his heart stop beating and forced him to rest against the wall. Even in his blackest moments, the happiness of meeting her gave him always some hours of intoxication, beyond the reach of all misfortune and all reasoning. For the rest, at the time of his death his character had certainly contracted more than one noble habit, after two years of this generous and boundless passion; and, in so far at least, he judged himself correctly. Had he lived, and circumstances helped him a little, he would

Là del riposo mio

La pietra surgerà.

II — passero amoroso,

E il nobile usignuol

Entro quel mirto ombroso

Raccoglieranno il vol.

Vieni, diletta Elvira,

A quella tomba vien,

E sulla muta lira,

Appoggia il bianco sen.

Su quella bruna pietra,

Le tortore verran,

E intorno alia mia cetra,

II — nido intrecieran.

E ogni anno, il di che offendere

M’osasti tu infedel,

Faro la su discendere

La folgore del ciel.

Odi d’un uom che muore

Odi l’estremo suon

Questo appassito fiore

Ti lascio, Elvira, in don

Quanto prezioso ei sia

Saper tu il devi appien

II — di che fosti mia,

Te l’involai dal sen.

Simbolo allor d’affetto

Or pegno di dolor

Torno a posarti in petto

Quest’ appassito fior.

E avrai nel cuor scolpito

Se crudo il cor non è,

Come ti fu rapito,

Come fu reso a te. — (S. Radael.)

have made a name for himself. Maybe also, just through his simplicity, his merit would have passed on this earth unseen.

O lasso

Quanti dolci pensier, quanto desio

Menô costui al doloroso passo!

Biondo era, e bello, e di gentile aspetto;

Ma l’un de’ cigli un colpo avea diviso.

(Dante)

did dare cruelly betray me, on this spot will I make the lightning of heaven descend. Listen, listen to the last utterances of a dying man. This faded flower, Elvira, is the gift I leave you. How precious it is you must know full well: from your bosom I stole it the day you became mine. Then it was a symbol of love; now as a pledge of suffering I will put it back in your bosom

— this faded flower. And you shall have engraved on your heart, if a woman’s heart you have, how it was snatched from you, how it was returned.]

CHAPTER XXXII

OF INTIMATE INTERCOURSE

THE greatest happiness that love can give—'tis first joining your hand to the hand of a woman you love.

The happiness of gallantry is quite otherwise — far more real, and far more subject to ridicule.

In passion-love intimate intercourse is not so much perfect delight itself, as the last step towards it.

But how depict a delight, which leaves no memories behind?

Mortimer returned from a long voyage in fear and trembling; he adored Jenny, but Jenny had not answered his letters. On his arrival in London, he mounts his horse and goes off to find her at her country home. When he gets there, she is walking in the park; he runs up to her, with beating heart, meets her and she offers him her hand and greets him with emotion; he sees that she loves him. Roaming together along the glades of the park, Jenny's dress became entangled in an acacia bush. Later on Mortimer won her; but Jenny was faithless. I maintain to him that Jenny never loved him and he quotes, as proof of her love, the way in which she received him at his return from the Continent; but he could never give me the slightest details of it. Only he shudders visibly directly he sees an acacia bush: really, it is the only distinct remembrance he succeeded in preserving of the happiest moment of his life.

A sensitive and open man, a former chevalier, confided to me this evening (in the depth of our craft buffeted by a high sea on the Lago di Garda) the history of his loves, which I in my turn shall not confide to the public. But I feel myself in a position to conclude from them that the day of intimate intercourse is like those fine days in May, a critical period for the fairest

flowers, a moment which can be fatal and wither in an instant the fairest hopes.

* * * * *

Naturalness cannot be praised too highly. It is the only coquetry permissible in a thing so serious as love à la Werther; in which a man has no idea where he is going, and in which at the same time by a lucky chance for virtue, that is his best policy. A man, really moved, says charming things unconsciously; he speaks a language which he does not know himself.

Woe to the man the least bit affected! Given he were in love, allow him all the wit in the world, he loses three-quarters of his advantages. Let him relapse for an instant into affectation — a minute later comes a moment of frost.

The whole art of love, as it seems to me, reduces itself to saying exactly as much as the degree of intoxication at the moment allows of, that is to say in other terms, to listen to one's heart. It must not be thought, that this is so easy; a man, who truly loves, has no longer strength to speak, when his mistress says anything to make him happy.

Thus he loses the deeds which his words would have given birth to. It is better to be silent than say things too tender at the wrong time, and what was in point ten seconds ago, is now no longer — in fact at this moment it makes a mess of things. Every time that I used to infringe this rule and say something, which had come into my head three minutes earlier and which I thought pretty, Léonore never failed to punish me. And later I would say to myself, as I went away—" She is right." This is the sort of thing to upset women of delicacy extremely; it is indecency of sentiment. Like tasteless rhetoricians, they are readier to admit a certain degree of weakness and coldness. There being nothing in the world to alarm them but the falsity of their lover, the least little insincerity of detail, be it the most innocent in the world, robs them instantly of all delight and puts mistrust into their heart.

Respectable women have a repugnance to what is vehement and unlooked for — those being none the less characteristics of passion — and, furthermore, that vehemence alarms their modesty; they are on the defensive against it.

When a touch of jealousy or displeasure has occasioned some chilliness, it is generally possible to begin subjects, fit to give birth to the excitement favourable to love, and, after the first two or three phrases of introduction, as long as a man does not miss the opportunity of saying exactly what his heart suggests, the pleasure he will give to his loved one will be keen. The fault of most men is that they want to succeed in saying something, which they think either pretty or witty or touching — instead of releasing their soul from the false gravity of the world, until a degree of intimacy and naturalness brings out in simple language what they are feeling at the moment. The man, who is brave enough for this, will have instantly his reward in a kind of peace-making.

It is this reward, as swift as it is involuntary, of the pleasure one gives to the object of one's love, which puts this passion so far above the others.

If there is perfect naturalness between them, the happiness of two individuals comes to be fused together. This is simply the greatest happiness which can exist, by reason of sympathy and several other laws of human nature.

It is quite easy to determine the meaning of this word naturalness — essential condition of happiness in love.

We call natural that which does not diverge from an habitual way of acting. It goes without saying that one must not merely never lie to one's love, but not even embellish the least bit or tamper with the simple outline of truth. For if a man is embellishing, his attention is occupied in doing so and no longer answers simply and truly, as the keys of a piano, to the feelings mirrored in his eye. The woman finds it out at once by a certain chilliness within her, and she, in her turn, falls back on coquetry. Might not here be found hidden the cause why it is impossible to love a woman with a mind too far below one's own — the reason being that, in her case, one can make pretence with impunity, and, as that course is more convenient, one abandons oneself to unnaturalness by force of habit? From that moment love

is no longer love; it sinks to the level of an ordinary transaction — the only difference being that, instead of money, you get pleasure or flattery or a mixture of both. It is hard not to feel a shade of contempt for a woman, before whom one can with impunity act a part, and consequently, in order to throw her over, one only needs to come across something better in her line. Habit or vow may hold, but I am speaking of the heart's desire, whose nature it is to fly to the greatest pleasure.

To return to this word natural — natural and habitual are two different things. If one takes these words in the same sense, it is evident that the more sensibility in a man, the harder it is for him to be natural, since the influence of habit on his way of being and acting is less powerful, and he himself is more powerful at each new event. In the life-story of a cold heart every page is the same: take him to-day or take him to-morrow, it is always the same dummy.

A man of sensibility, so soon as his heart is touched, loses all traces of habit to guide his action; and how can he follow a path, which he has forgotten all about?

He feels the enormous weight attaching to every word which he says to the object of his love — it seems to him as if a word is to decide his fate. How is he not to look about for the right word? At any rate, how is he not to have the feeling that he is trying to say "the right thing"? And then, there is an end of candour. And so we must give up our claim to candour, that quality of our being, which never reflects upon itself. We are the best we can be, but we feel what we are.

I fancy this brings us to the last degree of naturalness, to which the most delicate heart can pretend in love.

A man of passion can but cling might and main, as his only refuge in the storm, to the vow never to change a jot or tittle of the truth and to read the message of his heart correctly. If the conversation is lively and fragmentary, he may hope for some fine moments of naturalness: otherwise he will only be perfectly natural in hours when he will be a little less madly in love.

In the presence of the loved one, we hardly retain naturalness even in our movements, however deeply such habits are rooted in the muscles. When I gave my arm to Léonore, I always felt on the point of stumbling, and I wondered if I was walking properly. The most one can do is never to be affected willingly: it is enough to be convinced that want of naturalness is the greatest possible disadvantage, and can easily be the source of the greatest misfortunes. For the heart of the woman, whom you love, no longer understands your own; you lose that nervous involuntary movement of sincerity, which answers the call of sincerity. It means the loss of every way of touching, I almost said of winning her. Not that I pretend to deny, that a woman worthy of love may see her fate in that pretty image of the ivy, which "dies if it does not cling" — that is a law of Nature; but to make your lover's happiness is none the less a step that will decide your own. To me it seems that a reasonable woman ought not to give in completely to her lover, until she can hold out no longer, and the slightest doubt thrown on the sincerity of your heart gives her there and then a little strength — enough at least to delay her defeat still another day.

Is it necessary to add that to make all this the last word in absurdity you have only to apply it to gallant-love?

CHAPTER XXXIII

ALWAYS a little doubt to allay — that is what whets our appetite every moment, that is what makes the life of happy love. As it is never separated from fear, so its pleasures can never tire. The characteristic of this happiness is its high seriousness.

CHAPTER XXXIV

OF CONFIDENCES

THERE is no form of insolence so swiftly punished as that which leads you, in passion-love, to take an intimate friend into your confidence. He knows that, if what you say is true, you have pleasures a thousand times greater than he, and that your own make you despise his.

It is far worse between women — their lot in life being to inspire a passion, and the confidante having commonly also displayed her charms for the advantage of the lover.

On the other hand, for anyone a prey to this fever, there is no moral need more imperative than that of a friend, before whom to dilate on the fearful doubts which at every instant beset his soul; for in this terrible passion, always a thing imagined is a thing existent.

“A great fault in Salviati’s character,” he writes in 1817, “ — in this point how opposed to Napoleon’s! — is that when, in the discussion of interests in which passion is concerned, something is at last morally proved, he cannot resolve to take that as a fact once and for all established and as a point to start from. In spite of himself and greatly to his hurt, he brings it again and again under discussion.” The reason is that, in the field of ambition, it is easy to be brave. Crystallisation, not being subjected to the desire of the thing to be won, helps to fortify our courage; in love it is wholly in the service of the object against which our courage is wanted.

A woman may find an unfaithful friend, she also may find one with nothing to do.

A princess of thirty-five, with nothing to do and dogged by the need of action, of intrigue, etc etc., discontented with a lukewarm lover and yet

unable to hope to sow the seeds of another love, with no use to make of the energy which is consuming her, with no other distraction than fits of black humour, can very well find an occupation, that is to say a pleasure, and a life's work, in accomplishing the misfortune of a true passion — passion which someone has the insolence to feel for another than herself, while her own lover falls to sleep at her side.

It is the only case in which hate produces happiness; the reason being that it procures occupation and work.

Just at first, the pleasure of doing something, and, as soon as the design is suspected by society, the prick of doubtful success add a charm to this occupation. Jealousy of the friend takes the mask of hatred for the lover; otherwise how would it be possible to hate so madly a man one has never set eyes on? You cannot recognise the existence of envy, or, first, you would have to recognise the existence of merit; and there are flatterers about you who only hold their place at Court by poking fun at your good friend.

The faithless confidante, all the while she is indulging in villainies of the deepest dye, may quite well think herself solely animated by the desire not to lose a precious friendship. A woman with nothing to do tells herself that even friendship languishes in a heart devoured by love and its mortal anxieties. Friendship can only hold its own, by the side of love, by the exchange of confidences; but then what is more odious to envy than such confidences?

The only kind of confidences well received between women are those accompanied in all its frankness by a statement of the case such as this:—" My dear friend, in this war, as absurd as it is relentless, which the prejudices, brought into vogue by our tyrants, wage upon us, you help me to-day — to-morrow it will be my turn."

Beyond this exception there is another — that of true friendship born in childhood and not marred since by any jealousy...

The confidences of passion-love are only well received between schoolboys in love with love, and girls eaten up with unemployed curiosity and tenderness or led on perhaps by the instinct, which whispers to them that

there lies the great business of their life, and that they cannot look after it too early.

We have all seen little girls of three perform quite creditably the duties of gallantry. Gallant-love is inflamed, passion-love chilled by confidences.

Apart from the danger, there is the difficulty of confidences. In passion-love, things one cannot express (because the tongue is too gross for such subtleties) exist none the less; only, as these are things of extreme delicacy, we are more liable in observing them to make mistakes.

Also, an observer in a state of emotion is a bad observer; he won't allow for chance.

Perhaps the only safe way is to make yourself your own confidant. Write down this evening, under borrowed names, but with, all the characteristic details, the dialogue you had just now with the woman you care for, and the difficulty which troubles you. In a week, if it is passion-love, you will be a different man, and then, rereading your consultation, you will be able to give a piece of good advice to yourself.

In male society, as soon as there are more than two together, and envy might make its appearance, politeness allows none but physical love to be spoken of — think of the end of dinners among men. It is Baffo's sonnets that are quoted and which give such infinite pleasure; because each one takes literally the praises and excitement of his neighbour, who, quite often, merely wants to appear lively or polite. The sweetly tender words of Petrarch or French madrigals would be out of place.

CHAPTER XXXV

OF JEALOUSY

WHEN you are in love, as each new object strikes your eye or your memory, whether crushed in a gallery and patiently listening to a parliamentary debate, or galloping to the relief of an outpost under the enemy's fire, you never fail to add a new perfection to the idea you have of your mistress, or discover a new means (which at first seems excellent) of winning her love still more.

Each step the imagination takes is repaid by a moment of sweet delight. No wonder that existence, such as this, takes hold of one.

Directly jealousy comes into existence, this turn of feelings continues in itself the same, though the effect it is to produce is contrary. Each perfection that you add to the crown of your beloved, who now perhaps loves someone else, far from promising you a heavenly contentment, thrusts a dagger into your heart. A voice cries out: "This enchanting pleasure is for my rival to enjoy."

Even the objects which strike you, without producing this effect, instead of showing you, as before, a new way of winning her love, cause you to see a new advantage for your rival.

You meet a pretty woman galloping in the park; your rival is famous for his fine horses which can do ten miles in fifty minutes.

In this state, rage is easily fanned into life; you no longer remember that in love possession is nothing, enjoyment everything. You exaggerate the happiness of your rival, exaggerate the insolence happiness produces in him, and you come at last to the limit of tortures, that is to say to the extremest unhappiness, poisoned still further by a lingering hope.

The only remedy is, perhaps, to observe your rival's happiness at close quarters. Often you will see him fall peacefully asleep in the same salon as the woman, for whom your heart stops beating, at the mere sight of a hat like hers some way off in the street.

To wake him up you have only to show your jealousy. You may have, perhaps, the pleasure of teaching him the price of the woman who prefers him to you, and he will owe to you the love he will learn to have for her.

Face to face with a rival there is no mean — you must either banter with him in the most off-hand way you can, or frighten him.

Jealousy being the greatest of all evils, endangering one's life will be found an agreeable diversion. For then not all our fancies are embittered and blackened (by the mechanism explained above) — sometimes it is possible to imagine that one kills this rival.

According to this principle, that it is never right to add to the enemy's forces, you must hide your love from your rival, and, under some pretext of vanity as far as possible removed from love, say to him very quietly, with all possible politeness, and in the calmest, simplest tone: "Sir, I cannot think why the public sees good to make little So-and-so mine; people are even good enough to believe that I am in love with her. As for you, if you want her, I would hand her over with all my heart, if unhappily there were not the risk of placing myself into a ridiculous position. In six months, take her as much as ever you like, but at the present moment, honour, such as people attach (why, I don't know) to these things, forces me to tell you, to my great regret, that, if by chance you have not the justice to wait till your turn comes round, one of us must die."

Your rival is very likely a man without much passion, and perhaps a man of much prudence, who once convinced of your resolution, will make haste to yield you the woman in question, provided he can find any decent pretext. For that reason you must give a gay tone to your challenge, and keep the whole move hidden with the greatest secrecy.

What makes the pain of jealousy so sharp is that vanity cannot help you to bear it. But, according to the plan I have spoken of, your vanity has

something to feed on; you can respect yourself for bravery, even if you are reduced to despising your powers of pleasing.

If you would rather not carry things to such tragic lengths, you must pack up and go miles away, and keep a chorus-girl, whose charms people will think have arrested you in your flight.

Your rival has only to be an ordinary person and he will think you are consoled.

Very often the best way is to wait without flinching, while he wears himself out in the eyes of the loved one through his own stupidity. For, except in a serious passion formed little by little and in early youth, a clever woman does not love an undistinguished man for long. In the case of jealousy after intimate intercourse, there must follow also apparent indifference or real inconstancy. Plenty of women, offended with a lover whom they still love, form an attachment with the man, of whom he has shown himself jealous, and the play becomes a reality.

I have gone into some detail, because in these moments of jéalousy one often loses one's head. Counsels, made in writing a long time ago, are useful, and, the essential thing being to feign calmness, it is not out of place in a philosophical piece of writing, to adopt that tone.

As your adversaries' power over you consists in taking away from you or making you hope for things, whose whole worth consists in your passion for them, once manage to make them think you are indifferent, and suddenly they are without a weapon.

If you have no active course to take, but can distract yourself in looking for consolation, you will find some pleasure in reading Othello; it will make you doubt the most conclusive appearances. You will feast your eyes on these words: —

Trifles light as air

Seem to the jealous confirmations strong

As proofs from Holy Writ. (Othello, Act III.)

It is my experience that the sight of a fine sea is consoling.

The morning which had arisen calm and bright gave a pleasant effect to the waste mountain view, which was seen from the castle on looking to the landward, and the glorious ocean crisped with a thousand rippling waves of silver extended on the other side in awful, yet complacent majesty to the verge of the horizon. With such scenes of calm sublimity the human heart sympathises even in its most disturbed moods, and deeds of honour and virtue are inspired by their majestic influence. (The Bride of Lammermoor, Chap. VII.)

I find this written by Salviati: —

July 20th, 1818. — I often — and I think unreasonably — apply to life as a whole the feelings of a man of ambition or a good citizen, if he finds himself set in battle to guard the baggage or in any other post without danger or action. I should have felt regret at forty to have passed the age of loving without deep passion. I should have had that bitter and humiliating displeasure, to have found out too late that I had been fool enough to let life pass, without living.

Yesterday I spent three hours with the woman I love and a rival, whom she wants to make me think she favours. Certainly, there were moments of bitterness, in watching her lovely eyes fixed on him, and, on my departure, there were wild transports from utter misery to hope. But what changes, what sudden lights, what swift thoughts, and, in spite of the apparent happiness of my rival, with what pride and what delight my love felt itself superior to his! I went away saying to myself: The most vile fear would bleach those cheeks at the least of the sacrifices, which my love would make for the fun of it, nay, with delight — for example, to put this hand into a hat and draw one of these two lots: “Be loved by her,” the other—” Die on the spot.” And this feeling in me is so much second nature, that it did not prevent me being amiable and talkative.

If someone had told me all that two years ago, I should have laughed.

I find in the Travels to the Source of the Missouri River... in 1804-6 of Captains Lewis and Clarke (): —

The Ricaras are poor and generous; we stayed some time in three of their villages. Their women are more beautiful than those of the other tribes we came across; they are also not in the least inclined to let their lover languish. We found a new example of the truth that you only have to travel to find out that there is variety everywhere. Among the Ricaras, for a woman to grant her favours without the consent of her husband or her brother, gives great offence. But then the brothers and the husband are only too delighted to have the opportunity of showing this courtesy to their friends.

There was a negro in our crew; he created a great sensation among a people who had never seen a man of his colour before. He was soon a favourite with the fair sex, and we noticed that the husbands, instead of being jealous, were overjoyed to see him come to visit them. The funny part was that the interior of the huts was so narrow that everything was visible. member of the clergy (Mr. Jarvis) to make a report on the religion of the savage. The priest, of course, refutes energetically an impious Frenchman, called Volney. According to the priest, the savage has the most exact and noble ideas of the Divinity, etc. If he lived in England, such a report would bring the worthy academician a preferment of three or four hundred pounds and the protection of all the noble lords in the county. But in America! For the rest, the absurdity of this academy reminds me of the free Americans, who set the greatest store on seeing fine coats-of-arms painted on the panels of their carriages; what upsets them is that, through their carriage-painter’s want of instruction, the blazoning is often wrong.

CHAPTER XXXVI

OF JEALOUSY — (continued)

NOW for the woman suspected of inconstancy!

She leaves you, because you have discouraged crystallisation, but it is possible that in her heart you have habit to plead for you.

She leaves you, because she is too sure of you. You have killed fear, and there is nothing left to give birth to the little doubts of happy love. Just make her uneasy, and, above all, beware of the absurdity of protestations!

During all the time you have lived in touch with her, you will doubtless have discovered what woman, in society or outside it, she is most jealous or most afraid of. Pay court to that woman, but so far from blazoning it about, do your best to keep it secret, and do your best sincerely; trust to the eyes of anger to see everything and feel everything. The strong aversion you will have felt for several months to all women ought to make this easy. Remember that in the position you are in, everything is spoiled by a show of passion: avoid seeing much of the woman you love, and drink champagne with the wits.

In order to judge of your mistress' love, remember I. The more physical pleasure counts for in the basis of her love and in what formerly determined her to yield, the more prone it is to inconstancy, and, still more, to infidelity. This applies especially to love in which crystallisation has been favoured by the fire of sweet seventeen.

2. Two people in love are hardly ever equally in love: passion-love has its phases, during which now one, now the other is more impassioned. Often, too, it is merely gallantry or vain love which responds to passion-love, and it is generally the woman who is carried away by passion. But whatever the

love may be that either of them feels, directly one of them is jealous, he insists on the other fulfilling all the conditions of passion-love; vanity pretends to all the claims of a heart that feels.

Furthermore, nothing wearies gallant-love like passion-love from the other side.

Often a clever man, paying court to a woman, just sets her thinking of love in a sentimental frame of mind. She receives this clever man kindly for giving her this pleasure — he conceives hopes.

But one fine day that woman meets the man, who makes her feel what the other has described.

I do not know what are the effects of a man's jealousy on the heart of the woman he loves. Displayed by an admirer who wearies her, jealousy must inspire a supreme disgust, and it may even turn to hatred, if the man he is jealous of is nicer than the jealous one; for we want jealousy, said Madame de Coulanges, only from those of whom we could be jealous.

If the jealous one is liked, but has no real claims, his jealousy may offend that feminine pride so hard to keep in humour or even to recognise. Jealousy may please women of pride, as a new way of showing them their power.

Jealousy can please as a new way of giving proof of love. It can also offend the modesty of a woman who is over-refined.

It can please as a sign of the lover's hot blood — ferrum est quod amant. But note that it is hot blood they love, and not courage à la Turenne, which is quite compatible with a cold heart.

One of the consequences of crystallisation is that a woman can never say "yes" to the lover, to whom she has been unfaithful, if she ever means to make anything of him.

Such is the pleasure of continuing to enjoy the perfect image we have formed of the object of our attachment, that until that fatal "yes" —

L’on va chercher bien loin, plutôt que de mourir,

Quelque prétexte ami pour vivre et pour souffrir.

(André Chénier.)

Everyone in France knows the anecdote of Mademoiselle de Sommery, who, caught in flagrant delict by her lover, flatly denied the fact. On his protesting, she replied: “Very well, I see you don’t love me any more: you believe what you see before what I tell you.”

To make it up with an idol of a mistress, who has been unfaithful, is to set yourself to undo with the point of a dagger a crystallisation incessantly forming afresh. Love has got to die, and your heart will feel the cruel pang of every stage in its agony.

It is one of the saddest dispositions of this passion and of life. You must be strong enough to make it up only as friends.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ROXANA

AS for women's jealousy — they are suspicious, they have infinitely more at stake than we, they have made a greater sacrifice to love, have far fewer means of distraction and, above all, far fewer means of keeping a check on their lover's actions. A woman feels herself degraded by jealousy; she thinks her lover is laughing at her, or, still worse, making fun of her tenderest transports. Cruelty must tempt her — and yet, legally, she cannot kill her rival!

For women, jealousy must be a still more abominable evil than it is for men. It is the last degree of impotent rage and self-contempt which a heart can bear without breaking.

I know no other remedy for so cruel an evil, than the death of the one who is the cause of it or of the one who suffers. An example of French jealousy is the story of Madame de la Pommeraie in Jacques le Fataliste (19).

La Rochefoucauld says: "We are ashamed of owning we are jealous, but pride ourselves on having been and of being capable of jealousy." Poor woman dares not own even to having suffered this torture, so much ridicule does it bring upon her. So painful a wound can never quite heal up.

If cold reason could be unfolded before the fire of imagination with the merest shade of success, I would say to those wretched women, who are unhappy from jealousy: "There is a great difference between infidelity in man and in you. In you, the importance of the act is partly direct, partly symbolic. But, as an effect of the education of our military schools, it is in man the symbol of nothing at all. On the contrary, in women, through the effect of modesty, it is the most decisive of all the symbols of devotion. Bad habit makes it almost a necessity to men. During all our early years, the

example set by the so-called ‘bloods’ makes us set all our pride on the number of successes of this kind — as the one and only proof of our worth. For you, your education acts in exactly the opposite direction.”

As for the value of an action as symbol — in a moment of anger I upset a table on to the foot of my neighbour; that gives him the devil of a pain, but can quite easily be fixed up — or again, I make as if to give him a slap in the face....

The difference between infidelity in the two sexes is so real, that a woman of passion may pardon it, while for a man that is impossible.

Here we have a decisive ordeal to show the difference between passion-love and love from pique: infidelity in women all but kills the former and doubles the force of the latter.

Haughty women disguise their jealousy from pride. They will spend long and dreary evenings in silence with the man whom they adore, and whom they tremble to lose, making themselves consciously disagreeable in his eyes. This must be one of the greatest possible tortures, and is certainly one of the most fruitful sources of unhappiness in love. In order to cure these women, who merit so well all our respect, it needs on the man’s side a strong and out-of-the-way line of action — but, mind, he must not seem to notice what is going on — for example, a long journey with them undertaken at a twenty-four hours’ notice.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

OF SELF-ESTEEM PIQUED

PIQUE is a manifestation of vanity; I do not want my antagonist to go higher than myself and I take that antagonist himself as judge of my worth. I want to produce an effect on his heart. It is this that carries us so far beyond all reasonable limits.

Sometimes, to justify our own extravagance, we go so far as to tell ourselves that this rival has a mind to dupe us.

Pique, being an infirmity of honour, is far more common in monarchies; it must, surely, be exceedingly rare in countries, where the habit is rampant of valuing things according to their utility — for example, in the United States.

Every man, and a Frenchman sooner than any other, loathes being taken for a dupe; and yet the lightness of the French character under the old monarchic régime prevented pique from working great havoc beyond the domains of gallantry and gallant-love. Pique has produced serious tragedies only in monarchies, where, through the climate, the shade of character is darker (Portugal, Piedmont).

The provincial in France forms a ludicrous idea of what is considered a gentleman in good society — and then he takes cover behind his model, and waits there all his life to see that no one trespasses. And so good-bye naturalness! He is always in a state of pique, a mania which gives a laughable character even to his love affairs. This enviousness is what makes it most unbearable to live in small towns, and one should remind oneself of this, when one admires the picturesque situation of any of them. The most generous and noble emotions are there paralysed by contact with all that is most low in the products of civilisation. In order to put the finishing touch to

their awfulness, these bourgeois talk of nothing but the corruption of great cities.

Pique cannot exist in passion-love; it is feminine pride. “If I let my lover treat me badly, he will despise me and no longer be able to love me.” It may also be jealousy in all its fury.

Jealousy desires the death of the object it fears. The man in a state of pique is miles away from that — he wants his enemy to live, and, above all, be witness of his triumph.

He would be sorry to see his rival renounce the struggle, for the fellow may have the insolence to say in the depth of his heart: “If I had persevered in my original object, I should have outdone him.”

With pique, there is no interest in the apparent purpose — the point of everything is victory. This is well brought out in the love affairs of chorus-girls; take away the rival, and the boasted passion, which threatened suicide from the fifth-floor window, instantly subsides.

Love from pique, contrary to passion-love, passes in a moment; it is enough for the antagonist by an irrevocable step to own that he renounces the struggle. I hesitate, however, to advance this maxim, having only one example, and that leaves doubts in my mind. Here are the facts — the reader will judge. Dona Diana is a young person of twenty-three, daughter of one of the richest and proudest citizens of Seville. She is beautiful, without any doubt, but of a peculiar type of beauty, and is credited with ever so much wit and still more pride. She was passionately in love, to all appearances at least, with a young officer, with whom her family would have nothing to do. The officer left for America with Morillo, and they corresponded continuously. One day in the midst of a lot of people, assembled round the mother of Dona Diana, a fool announced the death of the charming officer. All eyes are turned upon Dona Diana; Dona Diana says nothing but these words: “What a pity — so young.”

Just that day we had been reading a play of old Massinger, which ends tragically, but in which the heroine takes the death of her lover with this apparent tranquillity. I saw the mother shudder in spite of her pride and

dislike; the father went out of the room to hide his joy. In the midst of this scene and the dismay of all present, who were making eyes at the fool who had told the story, Dona Diana, the only one at ease, proceeded with the conversation, as if nothing had happened. Her mother, in apprehension, set her maid to watch her, but nothing seemed to be altered in her behaviour.

Two years later, a very fine young man paid his attentions to her. This time again, and, still for the same reason, Dona Diana's parents violently opposed the marriage, because the aspirant was not of noble birth. She herself declared it should take place. A state of pique ensues between the daughter's sense of honour and the father's. The young man is forbidden the house. Dona Diana is no longer taken to the country and hardly ever to church. With scrupulous care, every means of meeting her lover is taken from her. He disguises himself and sees her secretly at long intervals. She becomes more and more resolute, and refuses the most brilliant matches, even a title and a great establishment at the Court of Ferdinand VII. The whole town is talking of the misfortunes of the two lovers and of their heroic constancy. At last the majority of Dona Diana draws near. She gives her father to understand that she means to make use of her right of disposing of her own hand. The family, driven back on its last resources, opens negotiations for the marriage. When it is half concluded, at an official meeting of the two families, the young man, after six years' constancy, refuses Dona Diana.

A quarter of an hour later no trace of anything — she was consoled. Did she love from pique? Or are we face to face with a great soul, that disclaims to parade its sorrow before the eyes of the world?

In passion-love satisfaction, if I can call it such, is often only to be won by piquing the loved one's self-esteem. Then, in appearance, the lover realises all that can be desired; complaints would be ridiculous and seem senseless. He cannot speak of his misfortune, and yet how constantly he knows and feels its prick! Its traces are inwoven, so to speak, with circumstances, the most flattering and the most fit to awaken illusions of enchantment. This misfortune rears its monstrous head at the tenderest moments, as if to taunt the lover and make him feel, at one and the same instant, all the delight of being loved by the charming and unfeeling creature in his arms, and the impossibility of this delight being his. Perhaps after jealousy, this is the cruellest unhappiness.

The story is still fresh in a certain large town of a man of soft and gentle nature, who was carried away by a rage of this kind to spill the blood of his mistress, who only loved him from pique agains t her sister. He arranged with her, one evening, to come for a row on the sea by themselves, in a pretty little boat he had devised himself. Once well out to sea, he touches a spring, the boat divides and disappears for ever.

I have seen a man of sixty set out to keep an actress, the most capricious, irresponsible, delightful and wonderful on the London stage — Miss Cornel.

“And you expect that she’ll be faithful?” people asked him.

“Not in the least. But she’ll be in love with me — perhaps madly in love.”

And for a whole year she did love him — often to distraction. For three whole months together she never even gave him subject for complaint. He had put a state of pique, disgraceful in many ways, between his mistress and his daughter.

Pique wins the day in gallant-love, being its very life and blood. It is the ordeal best fitted to differentiate between gallant-love and passion-love. There is an old maxim of war, given to young fellows new to their regiment, that if you are billeted on a house, where there are two sisters, and you want to have one, you must pay your attentions to the other. To win the majority of Spanish women, who are still young and ready for love affairs, it is enough to give out, seriously and modestly, that you have no feelings whatever for the lady of the house. I have this useful maxim from dear General Lassale. This is the most dangerous way of attacking passion-love.

Piqued self-esteem is the bond which ties the happiest marriages, after those formed by love. Many husbands make sure of their wives’ love for many years, by taking up with some little woman a couple of months after their marriage. In this way the habit is engendered of thinking only of one man, and family ties succeed in making the habit invincible.

If in the past century at the Court of Louis XV a great lady (Madame de Choiseul) was seen to worship her husband, the reason is that he seemed to take a keen interest in her sister, the Duchesse de Grammont.

The most neglected mistress, once she makes us see that she prefers another man, robs us of our peace and afflicts our heart with all the semblance of passion.

The courage of an Italian is an access of rage; the courage of a German a moment of intoxication; that of a Spaniard an outburst of pride. If there were a nation, in which courage were generally a matter of piqued selfesteem between the soldiers of each company and the regiments of each division, in the case of a rout there would be no support, and consequently there would be no means of rallying the armies of such a nation. To foresee the danger and try to remedy it, would be the greatest of all absurdities with such conceited runaways.

“It is enough to have opened any single description of a voyage among the savages of North America,” says one of the most delightful philosophers of France, “to know that the ordinary fate of prisoners of war is not only to be burnt alive and eaten, but first to be bound to a stake near a flaming bonfire and to be tortured there for several hours, by all the most ferocious and refined devices that fury can imagine. Read what travellers, who have witnessed these fearful scenes, tell of the cannibal joy of the assistants, above all, of the fury of the women and children, and of their gruesome delight in this competition of cruelty. See also what they add about the heroic firmness and immutable self-possession of the prisoner, who not only gives no sign of pain, but taunts and defies his torturers, by all that pride can make most haughty, irony most bitter, and sarcasm most insulting — singing his own glorious deeds, going through the number of the relations and friends of the onlookers whom he has killed, detailing the sufferings he has inflicted on them, and accusing all that stand around him of cowardice, timidity and ignorance of the methods of torture; until falling limb from limb, devoured alive under his own eyes by enemies drunk with fury, he gasps out his last whisper and his last insult together with his life’s breath. All this would be beyond belief in civilised nations, will look like fable to the most fearless captains of our grenadiers, and will one day be brought into doubt by posterity.”

This physiological phenomenon is closely connected with a particular moral state in the prisoner, which constitutes, between him on the one side and all

his torturers on the other, a combat of self-esteem — of vanity against vanity, as to who can hold out longer.

Our brave military doctors have often observed that wounded soldiers, who, in a calm state of mind and senses, would have shrieked out, during certain operations, display, on the contrary, only calmness and heroism, if they are prepared for it in a certain manner. It is a matter of piquing their sense of honour; you have to pretend, first in a roundabout way, and then with irritating persistence, that it is beyond their present power to bear the operation without shrieking.

CHAPTER XXXIX

OF QUARRELSOME LOVE

IT is of two kinds:

1. In which the originator of the quarrel loves.

2. In which he does not love.

If one of the lovers is too superior in advantages which both value, the love of the other must die; for sooner or later comes the fear of contempt, to cut short crystallisation.

Nothing is so odious to the mediocre as mental superiority. There lies the source of hatred in the world of to-day, and if we do not have to thank this principle for desperate enmities, it is solely due to the fact that the people it comes between are not forced to live together. What then of love? For here, everything being natural, especially on the part of the superior being, superiority is not masked by any social precaution.

For the passion to be able to survive, the inferior must ill-treat the other party; otherwise the latter could not shut a window, without the other taking offence.

As for the superior party, he deludes himself: the love he feels is beyond the reach of danger, and, besides, almost all the weaknesses in that which we love, make it only the dearer to us.

In point of duration, directly after passion-love reciprocated between people on the same level, one must put quarrelsome love, in which the quarreller does not love. Examples of this are to be found in the anecdotes, relative to the Duchesse de Berri (Memoirs of Duclos).

Partaking, as it does, of the nature of set habits, which are rooted in the prosaic and egoistic side of life and follow man inseparably to the grave, this love can last longer than passion-love itself. But it is no longer love, it is a habit engendered by love, which has nothing of that passion but memories and physical pleasure. This habit necessarily presupposes a less noble kind of being. Each day a little scene is got ready—" Will he make a fuss?" — which occupies the imagination, just as, in passion-love, every day a new proof of affection had to be found. See the anecdotes about Madame d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert.

It is possible that pride refuses to get used to this kind of occupation; in which case, after some stormy months, pride kills love. But we see the nobler passion make a long resistance before giving in. The little quarrels of happy love foster a long time the illusion of a heart that still loves and sees itself badly treated. Some tender reconciliations may make the transition more bearable. A woman excuses the man she has deeply loved, on the score of a secret sorrow or a blow to his prospects. At last she grows used to being scolded. Where, really, outside passion-love, outside gambling or the possession of power, can you find any other unfailing entertainment to be compared with it for liveliness? If the scolder happens to die, the victim who survives proves inconsolable. This is the principle which forms the bond of many middle-class marriages; the scolded can listen to his own voice all day long talking of his favourite subject.

There is a false kind of quarrelsome love. I took from the letters of a woman of extraordinary brilliance this in Chapter XXXIII "Always a little doubt to allay — that is what whets our appetite in passion-love every moment.... As it is never separated from fear, so its pleasures can never tire."

With rough and ill-mannered people, or those with a very violent nature, this little doubt to calm, this faint misgiving shows itself in the form of a quarrel.

If the loved one has not the extreme susceptibility, which comes of a careful education, she may find that love of this kind has more life in it, and consequently is more enjoyable. Even with all the refinement in the world, it is hard not to love "your savage" all the more, if you see him the first to suffer for his transports. What Lord Mortimer thinks back on, perhaps, with most regret for his lost mistress, are the candlesticks she threw at his head.

And, really, if pride forgives and permits such sensations, it must also be allowed that they do wage implacable warfare upon boredom — that arch-enemy of the happy!

Saint-Simon, the one historian France has had, says: —

After several passing fancies, the Duchesse de Berri had fallen in love, in real earnest, with Riom, cadet of the house of d'Aydie, son of a sister of Madame de Biron. He had neither looks nor sense: a stout, short youth, with a puffy white face, who with all his spots looked like one big abscess — though, true, he had fine teeth. He had no idea of having inspired a passion, which in less than no time went beyond all limits and lasted ever after, without, indeed, preventing passing fancies and cross-attachments. He had little property, and many brothers and sisters who had no more. M. and Madame de Pons, lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse de Berri, were related to them and of the same province, and they sent for the young man, who was a lieutenant in the dragoons, to see what could be made of him. He had scarcely arrived before the Duchess's weakness for him became public and Riom was master of the Luxembourg.

M. de Lauzun, whose grand-nephew he was, laughed in his sleeve; he was delighted to see in Riom a reincarnation at the Luxembourg of himself from the time of Mademoiselle. He gave Riom instructions which were listened to by him, as befitted a mild and naturally polite and respectful young fellow, well behaved and straightforward. But before long Riom began to feel the power of his own charms, which could only captivate the incomprehensible humour of this princess. Without abusing his power with others, he made himself liked by everyone, but he treated his duchess as M. de Lauzun had treated Mademoiselle. He was soon dressed in the richest laces, the richest suits, furnished with money, buckles, jewels. He made himself an object of admiration and took a delight in making the princess jealous or pretending to be jealous himself — bringing her often to tears. Little by little he reduced her to the state of doing nothing without his permission, not even in matters of indifference. At one time, ready to go out to the Opera, he made her stay at home; at another he made her go against her will. He forced her to do favours to ladies she disliked, or of whom she was jealous, and to injure people she liked, or of whom he pretended to be jealous. Even as far as dress, she was not allowed the smallest liberty. He used to amuse himself by

making her have her hair done all over again, or have her dress changed when she was completely ready — and this happened so often and so publicly, that he had accustomed her to take in the evening his orders for dress and occupation for the next day. The next day he would change it all and make the princess cry still more. At last she came to sending him messages by trusted valets — for he lived in the Luxembourg almost from the day of his arrival — and the messages had often to be repeated during her toilet for her to know what ribbons to wear and about her frock and other details of dress; and nearly always he made her wear what she disliked. If sometimes she gave herself some liberty in the smallest matter without leave, he treated her like a servant, and often her tears lasted several days.

This haughty princess, who was so fond of display and indulging her boundless pride, could bring herself so low as to partake of obscene parties with him and unmentionable people — she with whom no one could dine unless he were prince of the blood. The Jesuit Riglet, whom she as a child had known, and who had brought her up, was admitted to these private meals, without feeling ashamed himself or the Duchess being embarrassed. Madame de Mouchy was admitted into the secret of all these strange events; she and Riom summoned the company and chose the days. This lady was the peacemaker between the two lovers, and the whole of this existence was a matter of general knowledge at the Luxembourg. Riom was there looked to, as the centre of everything, while on his side he was careful to live on good terms with all, honouring them with a show of respect, which he refused in public only to his princess. Before everybody he would give her curt answers, which would make the whole company lower their eyes and bring blushes to the cheeks of the Duchess, who put no constraint upon her idolatry of him."

Riom was a sovereign remedy, for the Duchess, against the monotony of life.

A famous woman said once off-hand to General Bonaparte, then a young hero covered with glory and with no crimes against liberty on his conscience: "General, a woman could only be a wife or a sister to you." The hero did not understand the compliment, which the world has made up for with some pretty slanders.

The women, of whom we are speaking, like to be despised by their lover, whom they only love in his cruelty.

CHAPTER XXXIX (Part II)

REMEDIES AGAINST LOVE

THE leap of Leucas was a fine image of antiquity. It is true, the remedy of love is almost impossible. A danger is needed to call man's attention back sharply to look to his own preservation. But that is not all. What is harder to realise — a pressing danger must continue, and one that can only be averted with care, in order that the habit of thinking of his own preservation may have time to take root. I can see nothing that will do but a storm of sixteen days, like that in Don Juan or the shipwreck of M. Cochelet among the Moors. Otherwise, one gets soon used to the peril, and even drops back into thoughts of the loved one with still more charm — when reconnoitring at twenty yards' range from the enemy.

We have repeated over and over again that the love of a man, who loves well, delights in and vibrates to every movement of his imagination, and that there is nothing in nature which does not speak to him of the object of his love. Well, this delight and this vibration form a most interesting occupation, next to which all others pale.

A friend who wants to work the cure of the patient, must, first of all, be always on the side of the woman the patient is in love with — and all friends, with more zeal than sense, are sure to do exactly the opposite.

It is attacking with forces too absurdly inferior that combination of sweet illusions, which earlier we called crystallisation.

The friend in need should not forget this fact, that, if there is an absurdity to be believed, as the lover has either to swallow it or renounce everything which holds him to life, he will swallow it. With all the cleverness in the world, he will deny in his mistress the most palpable vices and the most

villainous infidelities. This is how, in passion-love, everything is forgiven after a little.

In the case of reasonable and cold characters, for the lover to swallow the vices of a mistress, he must only find them out after several months of passion.

Far from trying bluntly and openly to distract the lover, the friend in need ought to tire him with talking of his love and his mistress, and at the same time manage that a host of little events force themselves upon his notice. Even if travel isolates, it is still no remedy, and in fact nothing recalls so tenderly the object of our love as change of scene. It was in the midst of the brilliant Paris salons, next to women with the greatest reputation for charm, that I was most in love with my poor mistress, solitary and sad in her little room in the depth of the Romagna.

I looked at the superb clock in the brilliant salon, where I was exiled, for the hour she goes out on foot, even in the rain, to call on her friend. Trying to forget her, I have found that change of scene is the source of memories of one's love, less vivid but far more heavenly than those one goes in search for in places, where once upon a time one met her.

In order that absence may prove useful, the friend in need must be always at hand, and suggest to the lover's mind all possible reflections on the history of his love, trying to make these reflections tiresome through their length and importunity. In this way he gives them the appearance of commonplaces. For example, tender sentimental talk after a dinner enlivened with good wine.

It is hard to forget a woman, with whom one has been happy; for, remember, that there are certain moments the imagination can never be tired of evoking and beautifying.

I leave out all mention of pride, cruel but sovereign remedy, which, however, is not to be applied to sensitive souls.

The first scenes of Shakespeare's Romeo form an admirable picture; there is so vast a gap between the man who says sorrowfully to himself: "She hath

forsworn to love," and he who cries out in the height of happiness: "Come what sorrow can!"

CHAPTER XXXIX (Part III)

Her passion will die like a lamp for want of what the flame should feed upon. (Bride of Lammermoor, II, Chap. VI.)

THE friend in need must beware of faulty reasoning — for example, of talking about ingratitude. You are giving new life to crystallisation, by procuring it a victory and a new enjoyment.

In love there is no such thing as ingratitude; the actual pleasure always repays, and more than repays, sacrifices that seem the greatest. In love no other crime but want of honesty seems to me possible: one should be scrupulous as to the state of one's heart.

The friend in need has only to attack fair and square, for the lover to answer: —

"To be in love, even while enraged with the loved one, is nothing less, to bring myself down to your £ s d. style, than having a ticket in a lottery, in which the prize is a thousand miles above all that you can offer me, in your world of indifference and selfish interests. One must have plenty of vanity — and precious petty vanity — to be happy, because people receive you well. I do not blame men for going on like this, in their world, but in the love of Léonore I found a world where everything was heavenly, tender and generous. The most lofty and almost incredible virtue of your world counted, between her and me, only as any ordinary and everyday virtue. Let me at all events dream of the happiness of passing my life close to such a creature. Although I understand that slander has ruined me, and that I have nothing to hope for, at least I shall make her the sacrifice of my vengeance."

It is quite impossible to put a stop to love except in its first stages. Besides a prompt departure, and the forced distractions of society (as in the case of the Comtesse Kalember), there are several other little ruses, which the friend in

need can bring into play. For example, he can bring to your notice, as if by chance, the fact that the woman you love, quite outside the disputed area, does not even observe towards you the same amount of politeness and respect, with which she honours your rival. The smallest details are enough; for in love everything is a sign. For example, she does not take your arm to go up to her box. This sort of nonsense, taken tragically by a passionate heart, couples a pang of humiliation to every judgment formed by crystallisation, poisons the source of love and may destroy it.

One way against the woman, who is behaving badly to our friend, is to bring her under suspicion of some absurd physical defect, impossible to verify. If it were possible for the lover to verify the calumny, and even if he found it substantiated, it would be disqualified by his imagination, and soon have no place with him at all. It is only imagination itself which can resist imagination: Henry III knew that very well when he scoffed at the famous Duchesse de Montpensier (22).

Hence it is the imagination you must look to — above all, in a girl whom you want to keep safe from love. And the less her spirit has of the common stuff, the more noble and generous her soul, in a word the worthier she is of our respect, just so much greater the danger through which she must pass.

It is always perilous, for a girl, to suffer her memories to group themselves too repeatedly and too agreeably round the same individual. Add gratitude, admiration or curiosity to strengthen the bonds of memory, and she is almost certainly on the edge of the precipice. The greater the monotony of her everyday life, the more active are those poisons called gratitude, admiration and curiosity. The only thing, then, is a swift, prompt and vigorous distraction.

Just so, a little roughness and “slap-dash” in the first encounter, is an almost infallible means of winning the respect of a clever woman, if only the drug be administered in a natural and simple manner.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XL

EVERY kind of love and every kind of imagination, in the individual, takes its colour from one of these six temperaments: —

The sanguine, or French, — M. de Francueil (Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay); The choleric, or Spanish, — Lauzun (the Peguilhen of Saint-Simon's Memoirs); The melancholy, or German, — Schiller's Don Carlos; The phlegmatic, or Dutch; The nervous — Voltaire; The athletic — Milo of Croton.

If the influence of temperament makes itself felt in ambition, avarice, friendship, etc etc., what must it be in the case of love, in which the physical also is perforce an ingredient? Let us suppose that all kinds of love can be referred to the four varieties, which we have noted: —

Passion-love — Julie d'Etanges; (23)

Gallant-love or gallantry; Physical love; Vanity-love—" a duchess is never more than thirty for a bourgeois."

We must submit these four kinds of love to the six different characters, with which habits, dependent upon the six kinds of temperament, stamp the imagination. Tiberius did not have the wild imagination of Henry VIII.

Then let us submit all these combinations, thus obtained, to the differences of habit which depend upon government or national character: —

1. Asiatic despotism, such as may be seen at Constantinople; 2. Absolute monarchy à la Louis XIV; 3. Aristocracy masked by a charter, or government of a nation for the profit of the rich, as in England — all according to the rules of a self-styled biblical morality; 4. A federal republic, or government for the profit of all, as in the United States of America; 5. Constitutional monarchy, or —

6. A State in revolution, as Spain, Portugal, France (24). This state of things in a country gives lively passions to everyone, makes manners more natural, destroys puerilities, the conventional virtues and senseless proprieties — gives seriousness to youth and causes it to despise vanity-love and neglect gallantry.

This state can last a long time and form the habits of a generation. In France it began in 1788, was interrupted in 1802, and began again in 1818 — to end God knows when!

After all these general ways of considering love, we have the differences of age, and come finally to individual peculiarities.

For example, we might say: —

I found at Dresden, in Count Woltstein, vanity-love, a melancholy temperament, monarchical habits, thirty years, and... his individual peculiarities.

For anyone who is to form a judgment on love, this way of viewing things is conveniently short and cooling to the head — an essential, but difficult operation.

Now, as in physiology man has learnt scarcely anything about himself, except by means of comparative anatomy, so in the case of passions, through vanity and many other causes of illusion, we can only get enlightenment on what goes on in ourselves from the foibles we have observed in others. If by chance this essay has any useful effect, it will be by bringing the mind to make comparisons of this sort. To lead the way, I am going to attempt a sketch of some general traits in the character of love in different nations.

I beg for pardon if I often come back to Italy; in the present state of manners in Europe, it is the only country where the plant, which I describe, grows in all freedom. In France, vanity; in Germany, a pretentious and highly comical philosophy; in England, pride, timid, painful and rancorous, torture and stifle it, or force it into a crooked channel.

CHAPTER XLI

OF NATIONS WITH REGARD TO LOVE.

FRANCE

I MEAN to put aside my natural affections and be only a cold philosopher. French women, fashioned by their amiable men, themselves creatures only of vanity and physical desires, are less active, less energetic, less feared, and, what's more, less loved and less powerful, than Spanish and Italian women.

A woman is powerful only according to the degree of unhappiness, which she can inflict as punishment on her lover. Where men have nothing but vanity, every woman is useful, but none is indispensable. It is success in winning a woman's love, not in keeping it, which flatters a man. When men have only physical desires, they go to prostitutes, and that is why the prostitutes of France are charming and those of Spain the very reverse. In France, to a great many men prostitutes can give as much happiness as virtuous women — happiness, that is to say, without love. There is always one thing for which a Frenchman has much more respect than for his mistress — his vanity.

In Paris a young man sees in his mistress a kind of slave, whose destiny it is, before everything, to please his vanity. If she resist the orders of this dominating passion, he leaves her — and is only the better pleased with himself, when he can tell his friends in what a piquant way, with how smart a gesture, he waved her off.

A Frenchman, who knew his own country well (Meilhan), said: "In France, great passions are as rare as great men."

No language has words to express how impossible it is for a Frenchman to play the rôle of a deserted and desperate lover, in full view of a whole town — yet no sight is commoner at Venice or Bologna.

To find love at Paris, we must descend to those classes, in which the absence of education and of vanity, and the struggle against real want, have left more energy.

To let oneself be seen with a great and unsatisfied desire, is to let oneself be seen in a position of inferiority — and that is impossible in France, except for people of no position at all. It means exposing oneself to all kinds of sneers — hence come the exaggerated praises bestowed on prostitutes by young men who mistrust their own hearts. A vulgar susceptibility and dread of appearing in a position of inferiority forms the principle of conversation among provincial people. Think of the man who only lately, when told of the assassination of H.R.H. the Duke of Berri (25), answered: “I knew it.”

In the Middle Ages hearts were tempered by the presence of danger, and therein, unless I am mistaken, lies another cause of the astonishing superiority of the men of the sixteenth century. Originality, which among us is rare, comical, dangerous and often affected, was then of everyday and unadorned. Countries where even to-day danger often shows its iron hand, such as Corsica,

Spain or Italy, can still produce great men. In those climates, where men’s gall cooks for three months under the burning heat, it is activity’s direction that is to seek; at Paris, I fear, it is activity itself.

Many young men, fine enough to be sure at Montmirail or the Bois de Boulogne, are afraid of love; and when you see them, at the age of twenty, fly the sight of a young girl who has struck them as pretty, you may know that cowardice is the real cause. When they remember what they have read in novels is expected of a lover, their blood runs cold. These chilly spirits cannot conceive how the storm of passion, which lashes the sea to waves, also fills the sails of the ship and gives her the power of riding over them.

Love is a delicious flower, but one must have the courage to go and pick it on the edge of a frightful precipice. Besides ridicule, love has always staring

it in the face the desperate plight of being deserted by the loved one, and in her place only a dead blank for all the rest of one's life.

Civilisation would be perfect, if it could continue the delicate pleasures of the nineteenth century with a more frequent presence of danger. such surroundings to a palace with its lords-in-waiting and chamberlains, and a Fénelon obliged to find reasons for his respect to His Royal Highness, when speaking to H.R.H. himself, aged twelve years. See the works of that great writer.

It ought to be possible to augment a thousandfold the pleasures of private life by exposing it frequently to danger. I do not speak only of military danger. I would have this danger present at every instant, in every shape, and threatening all the interests of existence, such as formed the essence of life in the Middle Ages. Such danger as our civilisation has trained and refined, goes hand in hand quite naturally with the most insipid feebleness of character.

I hear the words of a great man in A Voice from St. Helena by Mr. O'Meara: —

Order Murat to attack and destroy four or five thousand men in such a direction, it was done in a moment; but leave him to himself, he was an imbecile without judgment. I cannot conceive how so brave a man could be so "lâche." He was nowhere brave unless before the enemy. There he was probably the bravest man in the world.... He was a paladin, in fact a Don Quixote in the field; but take him into the Cabinet, he was a poltroon without judgment or decision. Murat and Ney were the bravest men I ever witnessed. (O'Meara, Vol. II, .)

The presence of danger had kept in the language an energy and a freshness that we would not dare to hazard nowadays; and yet M. de Lameth killed his wife's lover. If a Walter Scott were to write a novel of the times of Lewis XIV, we should be a good deal surprised.

CHAPTER XLII

FRANCE (continued)

I BEG leave to speak ill of France a little longer. The reader need have no fear of seeing my satire remain unpunished; if this essay finds readers, I shall pay for my insults with interest. Our national honour is wide awake.

France fills an important place in the plan of this book, because Paris, thanks to the superiority of its conversation and its literature, is, and will always be, the salon of Europe.

Three-quarters of the billets in Vienna, as in London, are written in French or are full of French allusions and quotations — Lord knows what French!

As regards great passions, France, in my opinion, is void of originality from two causes: —

1. True honour — the desire to resemble Bayard (26) — in order to be honoured in the world and there, every day, to see your vanity satisfied.

2. The fool's honour, or the desire to resemble the upper classes, the fashionable world of Paris. The art of entering a drawing-room, of showing aversion to a rival, of breaking with your mistress, etc.

The fool's honour is much more useful than true honour in ministering to the pleasures of our vanity, both in itself, as being intelligible to fools, and also as being applicable to the actions of every day and every hour. We see people, with only this fool's honour and without true honour, very well received in society; but the contrary is impossible.

This is the way of the fashionable world: —

1. To treat all great interests ironically. ’Tis natural enough. Formerly people, really in society, could not be profoundly affected by anything; they hadn’t the time. Residence in the country has altered all this. Besides, it is contrary to a Frenchman’s nature to let himself be seen in a posture of admiration, that is to say, in a position of inferiority, not only in relation to the object of his admiration — that goes without saying — but also in relation to his neighbour, if his neighbour choose to mock at what he admires.

In Germany, Italy and Spain, on the contrary, admiration is genuine and happy; there the admirer is proud of his transports and pities the man who turns up his nose. I don’t say the mocker, for that’s an impossible rôle in countries, where it is not in failing in the imitation of a particular line of conduct, but in failing to strike the road to happiness, that the only ridicule exists. In the South, mistrust and horror at being troubled in the midst of pleasures vividly felt, plants in men an inborn admiration of luxury and pomp. See the Courts of Madrid and Naples; see a funzione at Cadiz — things are carried to a point of delirium.

2. A Frenchman thinks himself the most miserable of men, and almost the most ridiculous, if he is obliged to spend his time alone. But what is love without solitude?

3. A passionate man thinks only of himself; a man who wants consideration thinks only of others. Nay more: before 1789, individual security was only found in France by becoming one of a body, the Robe, for example, and by being protected by the members of that body. The thoughts of your neighbour were then an integral and necessary part of your happiness. This was still truer at the Court than in Paris. It is easy to see how far such manners, which, to say the truth, are every day losing their force, but which Frenchmen will retain for another century, are favourable to great passions.

Try to imagine a man throwing himself from a window, and at the same time trying to reach the pavement in a graceful position.

In France, the passionate man, merely as such, and in no other light, is the object of general ridicule. Altogether, he offends his fellow-men, and that gives wings to ridicule.

CHAPTER XLIII

ITALY (27)

ITALY'S good fortune is that it has been left to the inspiration of the moment, a good fortune which it shares, up to a certain point, with Germany and England.

Furthermore, Italy is a country where Utility, which was the guiding principle of the mediaeval republic, has not been dethroned by Honour or Virtue, disposed to the advantages of monarchy. True honour leads the way to the fool's honour. It accustoms men to ask themselves: What will my neighbour think of my happiness? But how can happiness of the heart be an object of vanity, since no one can see it f In proof of all this, France is the country, where there are fewer marriages from inclination than anywhere else in the world.

And Italy has other advantages. The Italian has undisturbed leisure and an admirable climate, which makes men sensible to beauty under every form. He is extremely, yet reasonably, mistrustful, which increases the aloofness of intimate love and doubles its charms. He reads no novels, indeed hardly any books, and this leaves still more to the inspiration of the moment. He has a passion for music, which excites in the soul a movement very similar to that of love.

In France, towards 1770, there was no mistrust; on the contrary, it was good form to live and die before the public. As the Duchess of Luxemburg was intimate with a hundred friends, there was no intimacy and no friendship, properly so-called.

In Italy, passion, since it is not a very rare distinction, is not a subject of ridicule, and you may hear people in the salons openly quoting general maxims of love. The public knows the symptoms and periods of this illness,

and is very much concerned with it. They say to a man who has been deserted: “You’ll be in despair for six months, but you’ll get over it in the end, like So-and-so, etc.”

In Italy, public opinion is the very humble attendant on passion. Real pleasure there exercises the power, which elsewhere is in the hands of society. ’Tis quite simple — for society can give scarcely any pleasure to a people, who has no time to be vain, and can have but little authority over those, who are only trying to escape the notice of their “pacha” (29). The blasés censure the passionate — but who cares for them? South of the Alps, society is a despot without a prison.

As in Paris honour challenges, sword in hand, or, if possible, bon mot in the mouth, every approach to every recognised great interest, it is much more convenient to take refuge in irony. Many young men have taken up a different attitude, and become disciples of J. J. Rousseau and Madame de Staël. As irony had become vulgar, one had to fall back on feelings. A. de Pezai in our days writes like M. Darlincourt. Besides, since 1789, everything tends to favour utility or individual sensibility, as opposed to honour or the empire of opinion. The sight of the two Chambers teaches people to discuss everything, even mere nonsense. The nation is becoming serious, and gallantry is losing ground.

As a Frenchman, I ought to say that it is not a small number of colossal fortunes, but the multiplicity of middling ones, that makes up the riches of a country. In every country passion is rare, and gallantry is more graceful and refined: in France, as a consequence, it has better fortune. This great nation, the first in the world, has the same kind of aptitude for love as for intellectual achievements. In 1822 we have, to be sure, no Moore, no Walter Scott, no Crabbe, no Byron, no Monti, no Pellico; but we have among us more men of intellect, clear-sighted, agreeable and up to the level of the lights of this century, than England has, or Italy. It is for this reason that the debates in our Chamber of Deputies in 1822, are so superior to those in the English Parliament, and that when a Liberal from England comes to France, we are quite surprised to find in him several opinions which are distinctly feudal.

A Roman artist wrote from Paris: —

I am exceedingly uncomfortable here; I suppose it's because I have no leisure for falling in love at my ease. Here, sensibility is spent drop by drop, just as it forms, in such a way, at least so I find it, as to be a drain on the source. At Rome, owing to the little interest created by the events of every day and the somnolence of the outside world, sensibility accumulates to the profit of passion.

CHAPTER XLIV

ROME

ONLY at Rome can a respectable woman, seated in her carriage, say effusively to another woman, a mere acquaintance, what I heard this morning: “Ah, my dear, beware of love with Fabio Vitteleschi; better for you to fall in love with a highwayman! For all his soft and measured air, he is capable of stabbing you to the heart with a knife, and of saying with the sweetest smile, while he plunged the knife into your breast: ‘Poor child, does it hurt?’” And this conversation took place in the presence of a pretty young lady of fifteen, daughter of the woman who received the advice, and a very wide-awake young lady.

If a man from the North has the misfortune not to be shocked at first by the candour of this southern capacity for love, which is nothing but the simple product of a magnificent nature, favoured by the twofold absence of good form and of all interesting novelty, after a stay of one year the women of all other countries will become intolerable to him.

He will find Frenchwomen, perfectly charming, with their little graces, seductive for the first three days, but boring the fourth — fatal day, when one discovers that all these graces, studied beforehand, and learned by rote, are eternally the same, every day and for every lover.

He will see German women, on the contrary, so very natural, and giving themselves up with so much ardour to their imagination, but often with nothing to show in the end, for all their naturalness, but barrenness, insipidity, and blue-stocking tenderness. The phrase of Count Almaviva (30) seems made for Germany: “And one is quite astonished, one fine evening, to find satiety, where one went to look for happiness.”

At Rome, the foreigner must not forget that, if nothing is tedious in countries where everything is natural, the bad is there still more bad than elsewhere. To speak only of the men, we can see appearing here in society a kind of monster, who elsewhere lies low — a man passionate, clear-sighted and base, all in an equal degree. Suppose evil chance has set him near a woman in some capacity or other: madly in love with her, suppose, he will drink to the very dregs the misery of seeing her prefer a rival. There he is to oppose her happier lover. Nothing escapes him, and everyone sees that nothing escapes him; but he continues none the less, in despite of every honourable sentiment, to trouble the woman, her lover and himself. No one blames him —"That's his way of getting pleasure."—" He is doing what gives him pleasure." One evening, the lover, at the end of his patience, gives him a kick. The next day the wretch is full of excuses, and begins again to torment, constantly and imperturbably, the woman, the lover and himself. One shudders, when one thinks of the amount of unhappiness that these base spirits have every day to swallow — and doubtless there is but one grain less of cowardice between them and a poisoner.

It is also only in Italy that you can see young and elegant millionaires entertaining with magnificence, in full view of a whole town, ballet girls from a big theatre, at a cost of thirty halfpence a day.

Two brothers X — , fine young fellows, always hunting and on horseback, are jealous of a foreigner. Instead of going and laying their complaint before him, they are sullen, and spread abroad unfavourable reports of this poor foreigner. In France, public opinion would force such men to prove their words or give satisfaction to the foreigner. Here public opinion and contempt mean nothing. Riches are always certain of being well received everywhere. A millionaire, dishonoured and excluded from every house in Paris, can go quite securely to Rome; there he will be estimated just according to the value of his dollars.

CHAPTER XLV

ENGLAND (31)

I HAVE lived a good deal of late with the ballet-girls of the Teatro Del Sol, at Valencia. People assure me that many of them are very chaste; the reason being that their profession is too fatiguing. Vigano makes them rehearse his ballet, the Jewess of Toledo, every day, from ten in the morning to four, and from midnight to three in the morning. Besides this, they have to dance every evening in both ballets.

This reminds me that Rousseau prescribes a great deal of walking for Emile. This evening I was strolling at midnight with these little ballet girls out along the seashore, and I was thinking especially how unknown to us, in our sad lands of mist, is this superhuman delight in the freshness of a sea breeze under this Valencian sky, under the eyes of these resplendent stars that seem close above us. This alone repays the journey of four hundred leagues; this it is that banishes thought, for feeling is too strong. I thought that the chastity of my little ballet girls gives the explanation of the course adopted by English pride, in order, little by little, to bring back the morals of the harem into the midst of a civilised nation. One sees how it is that some of these young English girls, otherwise so beautiful and with so touching an expression, leave something to be desired as regards ideas. In spite of liberty, which has only just been banished from their island, and the admirable originality of their national character, they lack interesting ideas and originality. Often there is nothing remarkable in them but the extravagance of their refinements. It's simple enough — in England the modesty of the women is the pride of their husbands. But, however submissive a slave may be, her society becomes sooner or later a burden. Hence, for the men, the necessity of getting drunk solemnly every evening, instead of as in Italy, passing the evening with their mistresses. In England, rich people, bored with their homes and under the pretext of necessary exercise, walk four or five leagues a day, as if man were created and put into the world to trot up

and down it. They use up their nervous fluid by means of their legs, not their hearts; after which, they may well talk of female refinement and look down on Spain and Italy.

No life, on the other hand, could be less busy than that of young Italians; to them all action is importunate, if it take away their sensibility. From time to time they take a walk of half a league for health's sake, as an unpleasant medicine. As for the women, a Roman woman in a whole year does not walk as far as a young Miss in a week.

It seems to me that the pride of an English husband exalts very adroitly the vanity of his wretched wife. He persuades her, first of all, that one must not be vulgar, and the mothers, who are getting their daughters ready to find husbands, are quick enough to seize upon this idea. Hence fashion is far more absurd and despotic in reasonable England than in the midst of light-hearted France: in Bond Street was invented the idea of the "carefully careless." In England fashion is a duty, at Paris it is a pleasure. In London fashion raises a wall of bronze between New Bond Street and Fenchurch Street far different from that between the Chausée d'Antin and the rue Saint-Martin at Paris. Husbands are quite willing to allow their wives this aristocratic nonsense, to make up for the enormous amount of unhappiness, which they impose on them. I recognise a perfect picture of women's society in England, such as the taciturn pride of its men produces, in the once celebrated novels of Miss Burney. Since it is vulgar to ask for a glass of water, when one is thirsty, Miss Burney's heroines do not fail to let themselves die of thirst. While flying from vulgarity, they fall into the most abominable affectation.

Compare the prudence of a young Englishman of twenty-two with the profound mistrust of a young Italian of the same age. The Italian must be mistrustful to be safe, but this mistrust he puts aside, or at least forgets, as soon as he becomes intimate, while it is apparently just in his most tender relationships that you see the young Englishman redouble his prudence and aloofness. I once heard this: —

"In the last seven months I haven't spoken to her of the trip to Brighton." This was a question of a necessary economy of twenty-four pounds, and a lover of twenty-two years speaking of a mistress, a married woman, whom

he adored. In the transports of his passion prudence had not left him: far less had he let himself go enough to say to his mistress: “I shan’t go to Brighton, because I should feel the pinch.”

Note that the fate of Gianone de Pellico, and of a hundred others, forces the Italian to be mistrustful, while the young English beau is only forced to be prudent by the excessive and morbid sensibility of his vanity. A Frenchman, charming enough with his inspirations of the minute, tells everything to her he loves. It is habit. Without it he would lack ease, and he knows that without ease there is no grace.

It is with difficulty and with tears in my eyes that I have plucked up courage to write all this; but, since I would not, I’m sure, flatter a king, why should I say of a country anything but what seems to me the truth? Of course it may be all very absurd, for the simple reason that this country gave birth to the most lovable woman that I have known.

It would be another form of cringing before a monarch. I will content myself with adding that in the midst of all this variety of manners, among so many Englishwomen, who are the spiritual victims of Englishmen’s pride, a perfect form of originality does exist, and that a family, brought up aloof from these distressing restrictions (invented to reproduce the morals of the harem) may be responsible for charming characters. And how insufficient, in spite of its etymology, — and how common — is this word “charming” to render what I would express. The gentle Imogen, the tender Ophelia might find plenty of living models in England; but these models are far from enjoying the high veneration that is unanimously accorded to the true accomplished Englishwoman, whose destiny is to show complete obedience to every convention and to afford a husband full enjoyment of the most morbid aristocratic pride and a happiness that makes him die of boredom.

In the great suites of fifteen or twenty rooms, so fresh and so dark, in which Italian women pass their lives softly propped on low divans, they hear people speak of love and of music for six hours in the day. At night, at the theatre, hidden in their boxes for four hours, they hear people speak of music and love.

Then, besides the climate, the whole way of living is in Spain or Italy as favourable to music and love, as it is the contrary in England.

I neither blame nor approve; I observe.

CHAPTER XLVI

ENGLAND — (continued)

I LOVE England too much and I have seen of her too little to be able to speak on the subject. I shall make use of the observations of a friend.

In the actual state of Ireland (1822) is realised, for the twentieth time in two centuries, that curious state of society which is so fruitful of courageous resolutions, and so opposed to a monotonous existence, and in which people, who breakfast gaily together, may meet in two hours' time on the field of battle. Nothing makes a more energetic and direct appeal to that disposition of the spirit, which is most favourable to the tender passions — to naturalness. Nothing is further removed from the two great English vices — cant and bashfulness, — moral hypocrisy and haughty, painful timidity. (See the Travels of Mr. Eustace (32) in Italy.) If this traveller gives a poor picture of the country, in return he gives a very exact idea of his own character, and this character, as that of Mr. Beattie (32), the poet (see his Life written by an intimate friend), is unhappily but too common in England. For the priest, honest in spite of his cloth, refer to the letters of the Bishop of Landaff. (32).

One would have thought Ireland already unfortunate enough, bled as it has been for two centuries by the cowardly and cruel tyranny of England; but now there enters into the moral state of Ireland a terrible personage: the Priest....

For two centuries Ireland has been almost as badly governed as Sicily. A thorough comparison between these two islands, in a volume of five hundred pages, would offend many people and overwhelm many established theories with ridicule. What is evident is that the happiest of these two countries — both of them governed by fools, only for the profit of a minority — is Sicily. Its governors have at least left it its love of pleasure; they would willingly

have robbed it of this as of the rest, but, thanks to its climate, Sicily knows little of that moral evil called Law and Government.

It is old men and priests who make the laws and have them executed, and this seems quite in keeping with the comic jealousy, with which pleasure is hunted down in the British Isles. The people there might say to its governors as Diogenes said to Alexander: “Be content with your sinecures, but please don’t step between me and my daylight.”

By means of laws, rules, counter-rules and punishments, the Government in Ireland has created the potato, and the population of Ireland exceeds by far that of Sicily. This is to say, they have produced several millions of degenerate and half-witted peasants, broken down by work and misery, dragging out a wretched life of some forty or fifty years among the marshes of old Erin — and, you may be sure, paying their taxes! A real miracle! With the pagan religion these poor wretches would at least have enjoyed some happiness — but not a bit of it, they must adore St. Patrick.

Everywhere in Ireland one sees none but peasants more miserable than savages. Only, instead of there being a hundred thousand, as there would be in a state of nature, there are eight millions, who allow five hundred “absentees” to live in prosperity at London or Paris.

Society is infinitely more advanced in Scotland, where, in very many respects, government is good (the rarity of crime, the diffusion of reading, the non-existence of bishops, etc.). There the tender passions can develop much more freely, and it is possible to leave these sombre thoughts and approach the humorous.

One cannot fail to notice a foundation of melancholy in Scottish women. This melancholy is particularly seductive at dances, where it gives a singular piquancy to the extreme ardour and energy with which they perform their national dances. Edinburgh has another advantage, that of being withdrawn from the vile empire of money. In this, as well as in the singular and savage beauty of its site, this city forms a complete contrast with London. Like Rome, fair Edinburgh seems rather the sojourn of the contemplative life. At London you have the ceaseless whirlwind and restless interests of active life, with all its advantages and inconveniences. Edinburgh seems to me to pay its

tribute to the devil by a slight disposition to pedantry. Those days when Mary Stuart lived at old Holyrood, and Riccio was assassinated in her arms, were worth more to Love (and here all women will agree with me) than to-day, when one discusses at such length, and even in their presence, the preference to be accorded to the neptunian system over the vulcanian system of... I prefer a discussion on the new uniform given by the king to the Guards, or on the peerage which Sir B. Bloomfield (35) failed to get — the topic of London in my day — to a learned discussion as to who has best explored the nature of rocks, de Werner or de...

I say nothing about the terrible Scottish Sunday, after which a Sunday in London looks like a beanfeast. That day, set aside for the honour of Heaven, is the best image of Hell that I have ever seen on earth. “Don’t let’s walk so fast,” said a Scotchman returning from church to a Frenchman, his friend; “people might think we were going for a walk.”

Of the three countries, Ireland is the one in which there is the least hypocrisy. See the New Monthly Magazine thundering against Mozart and the Nozze di Figaro.

In every country it is the aristocrats, who try to judge a literary magazine and literature; and for the last four years in England these have been hand in glove with the bishops. As I say, that of the three countries where, it seems to me, there is the least hypocrisy, is Ireland: on the contrary, you find there a reckless, a most fascinating vivacity. In Scotland there is the strict observance of Sunday, but on Monday they dance with a joy and an abandon unknown to London. There is plenty of love among the peasant class in Scotland. The omnipotence of imagination gallicised the country in the sixteenth century.

The terrible fault of English society, that which in a single day creates a greater amount of sadness than the national debt and its consequences, and even than the war to the death waged by the rich against the poor, is this sentence which I heard last autumn at Croydon, before the beautiful statue of the bishop: “In society no one wants to put himself forward, for fear of being deceived in his expectations.”

Judge what laws, under the name of modesty, such men must impose on their wives and mistresses.

CHAPTER XLVII

SPAIN (36)

ANDALUSIA is one of the most charming sojourns that Pleasure has chosen for itself on earth. I had three or four anecdotes to show how my ideas about the three or four different acts of madness, which together constitute Love, hold good for Spain: I have been advised to sacrifice them to French refinement. In vain I protested that I wrote in French, but emphatically not French literature. God preserve me from having anything in common with the French writers esteemed to-day!

The Moors, when they abandoned Andalusia, left it their architecture and much of their manners. Since it is impossible for me to speak of the latter in the language of Madame de Sevigné, I'll at least say this of Moorish architecture: — its principal trait consists in providing every house with a little garden surrounded by an elegant and graceful portico. There, during the unbearable heat of summer, when for whole weeks together the Réaumur thermometer never falls below a constant level of thirty degrees, a delicious obscurity pervades these porticoes. In the middle of the little garden there is always a fountain, monotonous and voluptuous, whose sound is all that stirs this charming retreat. The marble basin is surrounded by a dozen orange-trees and laurels. A thick canvas, like a tent, covers in the whole of the little garden, and, while it protects it from the rays of the sun and from the light, lets in the gentle breezes which, at midday, come down from the mountains.

There live and receive their guests the fair ladies of Andalusia: a simple black silk robe, ornamented with fringes of the same colour, and giving glimpses of a charming ankle; a pale complexion and eyes that mirror all the most fugitive shades of the most tender and ardent passion — such are the celestial beings, whom I am forbidden to bring upon the scene.

I look upon the Spanish people as the living representatives of the Middle Age.

It is ignorant of a mass of little truths (the puerile vanity of its neighbours); but it has a profound knowledge of great truths and enough character and wit to follow their consequences down to their most remote effects. The Spanish character offers a fine contrast to French intellect — hard, brusque, inelegant, full of savage pride, and unconcerned with others. It is just the contrast of the fifteenth with the eighteenth century.

Spain provides me with a good contrast; the only people, that was able to withstand Napoleon, seems to me to be absolutely lacking in the fool's honour and in all that is foolish in honour.

Instead of making fine military ordinances, of changing uniforms every six months and of wearing large spurs, Spain has general No importa.

CHAPTER XLVIII (37)

GERMAN LOVE

IF the Italian, always agitated between love and hate, is a creature of passion, and the Frenchman of vanity, the good and simple descendants of the ancient Germans are assuredly creatures of imagination. Scarcely raised above social interests, the most directly necessary to their subsistence, one is amazed to see them soar into what they call their philosophy, which is a sort of gentle, lovable, quite harmless folly. I am going to cite, not altogether from memory, but from hurriedly taken notes, a work whose author, though writing in a tone of opposition, illustrates clearly, even in his admirations, the military spirit in all its excesses — I speak of the Travels in Austria of M. Cadet-Gassicourt, in 1809. What would the noble and generous Desaix have said, if he had seen the pure heroism of'95 lead on to this execrable egoism?

Two friends find themselves side by side with a battery at the battle of Talavera, one as Captain in command, the other as lieutenant. A passing bullet lays the Captain low. "Good," says the lieutenant, quite beside himself with joy, "that's done for Francis — now I shall be Captain."

"Not so quick," cries Francis, as he gets up. He had only been stunned by the bullet. The lieutenant, as well as the Captain, were the best fellows in the world, not a bit ill-natured, and only a little stupid; the excitement of the chase and the furious egoism which the Emperor had succeeded in awakening, by decorating it with the name of glory, made these enthusiastic worshippers of him forget their humanity.

After the harsh spectacle offered by men like this, who

dispute on parade at Schoenbrunn for a look from their master and a barony — see how the Emperor's apothecary describes German love, page 188:

“Nothing can be more sweet, more gentle, than an Austrian woman. With her, love is a cult, and when she is attached to a Frenchman, she adores him — in the full force of the word.

“There are light, capricious women everywhere, but in general the Viennese are faithful and in no way coquettes; when I say that they are faithful, I mean to the lover of their own choice, for husbands are the same at Vienna as everywhere else” (June 7, 1809).

The most beautiful woman of Vienna accepts the homage of one of my friends, M. M — , a captain attached to the Emperor’s headquarters. He’s a young man, gentle and witty, but certainly neither his figure nor face are in any way remarkable.

For some days past his young mistress has made a very great sensation among our brilliant staff officers, who pass their life ferreting about in every corner of Vienna. It has become a contest of daring. Every possible manoeuvre has been employed. The fair one’s house has been put in a state of siege by all the best-looking and richest. Pages, brilliant colonels, generals of the guard, even princes, have gone to waste their time under her windows, and their money on the fair lady’s servants. All have been turned away. These princes were little accustomed to find a deaf ear at Paris or Milan. When I laughed at their discomfiture before this charming creature: “But good Heavens,” she said, “don’t they know that I’m in love with M. M....?”

A singular remark and certainly a most improper one! Page 290: “While we were at Schoenbrunn I noticed that two young men, who were attached to the Emperor, never received anyone in their lodgings at Vienna. We used to chaff them a lot on their discretion. One of them said to me one day: ‘I’ll keep no secrets from you: a young woman of the place has given herself to me, on condition that she need never leave my apartment, and that I never receive anyone at all without her leave.’ I was curious,” says the traveller, “to know this voluntary recluse, and my position as doctor giving me, as in the East, an honourable pretext, I accepted a breakfast offered me by my friend. The woman I found was very much in love, took the greatest care of the household, never wanted to go out, though it was just a pleasant time of the year for walking — and for the rest, was quite certain that her lover would take her back with him to France.

“The other young man, who was also never to be found in his rooms, soon after made me a similar confession. I also saw his mistress. Like the first, she was fair, very pretty, and an excellent figure.

“The one, eighteen years of age, was the daughter of a well-to-do upholsterer; the other, who was about twenty-four, was the wife of an Austrian officer, on service with the army of the Archduke John. This latter pushed her love to the verge of what we, in our land of vanity, would call heroism. Not only was her lover faithless to her, he also found himself under the necessity of making a confession of a most unpleasant nature. She nursed him with complete devotion; the seriousness of his illness attached her to her lover; and perhaps she only cherished him the more for it, when soon after his life was in danger.

“It will be understood that I, a stranger and a conqueror, have had no chance of observing love in the highest circles, seeing that the whole of the aristocracy of Vienna had retired at our approach to their estates in Hungary. But I have seen enough of it to be convinced that it is not the same love as at Paris.

“The feeling of love is considered by the Germans as a virtue, as an emanation of the Divinity, as something mystical. It is not quick, impetuous, jealous, tyrannical, as it is in the heart of an Italian woman: it is profound and something like illuminism; in this Germany is a thousand miles away from England.

“Some years ago a Leipsic tailor, in a fit of jealousy, waited for his rival in the public garden and stabbed him. He was condemned to lose his head. The moralists of the town, faithful to the German traditions of kindness and unhampered emotion (which makes for feebleness of character) discussed the sentence, decided that it was severe and, making a comparison between the tailor and Orosmanes, were moved to pity for his fate. Nevertheless they were unable to have his sentence mitigated. But the day of the execution, all the young girls of Leipsic, dressed in white, met together and accompanied the tailor to the scaffold, throwing flowers in his path.

“No one thought this ceremony odd; yet, in a country which considers itself logical, it might be said that it was honouring a species of murder. But it was

a ceremony — and everything which is a ceremony, is always safe from ridicule in Germany. See the ceremonies at the Courts of the small princes, which would make us Frenchmen die with laughter, but appear quite imposing at Meiningen or Koethen. In the six gamekeepers who file past their little prince, adorned with his star, they see the soldiers of Arminius marching out to meet the legions of Varus.

“A point of difference between the Germans and all other peoples: they are exalted, instead of calming themselves, by meditation. A second subtle point: they are all eaten up with the desire to have character.

“Life at Court, ordinarily so favourable to love, in Germany deadens it. You have no idea of the mass of incomprehensible minutiœ and the pettinesses that constitute what is called a German Court, — even the Court of the best princes. (Munich, 1820).

“When we used to arrive with the staff in a German town, at the end of the first fortnight the ladies of the district had made their choice. But that choice was constant; and I have heard it said that the French were a shoal, on which foundered many a virtue till then irreproachable.”

The young Germans whom I have met at Gottingen, Dresden, Koenigsberg, etc., are brought up among pseudo-systems of philosophy, which are merely obscure and badly written poetry, but, as regards their ethics, of the highest and holiest sublimity. They seem to me to have inherited from their Middle Age, not like the Italians, republicanism, mistrust and the dagger, but a strong disposition to enthusiasm and good faith. Thus it is that every ten years they have a new great man who’s going to efface all the others. (Kant, Steding, Fichte, etc etc.)

Formerly Luther made a powerful appeal to the moral sense, and the Germans fought thirty years on end, in order to obey their conscience. It’s a fine word and one quite worthy of respect, however absurd the belief; I say worthy of respect even from an artist. See the struggle in the soul of S — between the third [sixth] commandment of God—” Thou shalt not kill” — and what he believed to be the interest of his country.

Already in Tacitus we find a mystical enthusiasm for women and love, at least if that writer was not merely aiming his satire at Rome.

One has not been five hundred miles in Germany, before one can distinguish in this people, disunited and scattered, a foundation of enthusiasm, soft and tender, rather than ardent and impetuous.

If this disposition were not So apparent, it would be enough to reread three or four of the novels of Auguste La Fontaine, whom the pretty Louise, Queen of Prussia, made Canon of Magdeburg, as a reward for having so well painted the Peaceful Life.

I see a new proof of this disposition, which is common to all the Germans, in the Austrian code, which demands the confession of the guilty for the punishment of almost all crimes. This code is calculated to fit a people, among whom crime is a rare phenomenon, and sooner an excess of madness in a feeble being than the effect of interests, daring, reasoned and for ever in conflict with society. It is precisely the contrary of what is wanted in Italy, where they are trying to introduce it — a mistake of well-meaning people.

I have seen German judges in Italy in despair over sentences of death or, what's the equivalent, the irons, if they were obliged to pronounce it without the confession of the guilty.

CHAPTER XLIX

A DAY IN FLORENCE

FLORENCE, February 12, 1819.

THIS evening, in a box at the theatre, I met a man who had some favour to ask of a magistrate, aged fifty. His first question was: “Who is his mistress? Chi avvicina adesso P” Here everyone’s affairs are absolutely public; they have their own laws; there is an approved manner of acting, which is based on justice without any conventionality — if you act otherwise, you are a porco.

“What’s the news?” one of my friends asked yesterday, on his arrival from Volterra. After a word of vehement lamentation about Napoleon and the English, someone adds, in a tone of the liveliest interest: “La Vitteleschi has changed her lover: poor Gherardesca is in despair.”—” Whom has she taken?”—” Montegalli, the good-looking officer with a moustache, who had Princess Colonna; there he is down in the stalls, nailed to her box; he’s there the whole evening, because her husband won’t have him in the house, and there near the door you can see poor Gherardesca, walking about so sadly and counting afar the glances, which his faithless mistress throws his successor. He’s very changed and in the depths of despair; it’s quite useless for his friends to try to send him to Paris or London. He is ready to die, he says, at the very idea of leaving Florence.” Every year there are twenty such cases of despair in high circles; some of them I have seen last three or four

years. These poor devils are without any shame and take the whole world into thèir confidence. For the rest, there’s little society here, and besides, when one’s in love, one hardly mixes with it. It must not be thought that great passions and great hearts are at all common, even in Italy; only, in Italy, hearts which are more inflamed and less stunted by the thousand little cares of our vanity, find delicious pleasures even in the subaltern species of

love. In Italy I have seen love from caprice, for example, cause transports and moments of madness, such as the most violent passion has never brought with it under the meridian of Paris.

I noticed this evening that there are proper names in Italian for a million particular circumstances in love, which, in French, would need endless paraphrases; for example, the action of turning sharply away, when from the floor of the house you are quizzing a woman you are in love with, and the husband or a servant come towards the front of her box.

The following are the principal traits in the character of this people: —

1. The attention, habitually at the service of deep passions, cannot move rapidly. This is the most marked difference between a Frenchman and an Italian. You have only to see an Italian get into a diligence or make a payment, to understand “la furia francese.” It’s for this reason that the most vulgar Frenchman, provided that he is not a witty fool, like Démasure, always seems a superior being to an Italian woman. (The lover of Princess D — at Rome.)

2. Everyone is in love, and not under cover, as in France; the husband is the best friend of the lover.

3. No one reads.

4. There is no society. A man does not reckon, in order to fill up and occupy his life, on the happiness which he derives from two hours’ conversation and the play of vanity in this or that house. The word causerie cannot be translated into Italian. People speak when they have something to say, to forward a passion, but they rarely talk just in order to talk on any given subject.

5. Ridicule does not exist in Italy.

In France, both of us are trying to imitate the same model, and I am a competent judge of the way in which you copy it. In Italy I cannot say whether the peculiar action, which I see this man perform, does not give pleasure to the performer and might not, perhaps, give pleasure to me.

What is affectation of language or manner at Rome, is good form or unintelligible at Florence, which is only fifty leagues away. The same French is spoken at Lyons as at Nantes. Venetian, Neapolitan Genoese, Piedmontese are almost entirely different languages, and only spoken by people who are agreed never to print except in a common language, namely that spoken at Rome. Nothing is so absurd as a comedy, with the scene laid at Milan and the characters speaking Roman. It is only by music that the Italian language, which is far more fit to be sung than spoken, will hold its own against the clearness of French, which threatens it.

In Italy, fear of the "pacha" (29) and his spies causes the useful to be held in esteem; the fool's honour simply doesn't exist. Its place is taken by a kind of petty hatred of society, called "petegolismo." Finally, to make fun of a person is to make a mortal enemy, a very dangerous thing in a country where the power and activity of governments is limited to exacting taxes and punishing everything above the common level.

6. The patriotism of the antechamber.

That pride which leads a man to seek the esteem of his fellow-citizens and to make himself one of them, but which in Italy was cut off, about the year 1550, from any noble enterprise by the jealous despotism of the small Italian princes, has given birth to a barbarous product, to a sort of Caliban, to a monster full of fury and sottishness, the patriotism of the antechamber, as M. Turgot called it, à propos of the siege of Calais (the Soldat laboureur (40) of those times.) I have seen this monster blunt the sharpest spirits. For example, a stranger will make himself unpopular, even with pretty women, if he thinks fit to find anything wrong with the painter or poet of the town; he will be soon told, and that very seriously, that he ought not to come among people to laugh at them, and they will quote to him on this topic a saying of Lewis XIV about Versailles.

At Florence people say: "our Benvenuti," as at Brescia—" our Arrici": they put on the word "our" a certain emphasis, restrained yet very comical, not unlike the Miroir talking with unction about national music and of M. Monsigny, the musician of Europe.

In order not to laugh in the face of these fine patriots one must remember that, owing to the dissensions of the Middle Age, envenomed by the vile policy of the Popes, each city has a mortal hatred for its neighbour, and the name of the inhabitants in the one always stands in the other as a synonym for some gross fault. The Popes have succeeded in making this beautiful land into the kingdom of hate.

This patriotism of the antechamber is the greatest moral sore in Italy, a corrupting germ that will still show its disastrous effects long after Italy has thrown off the yoke of its ridiculous little priests. The form of this patriotism is an inexorable hatred for everything foreign.

Thus they look on the Germans as fools, and get angry when someone says: "What has Italy in the eighteenth century produced the equal of Catherine II or Frederick the Great? Where have you an English garden comparable to the smallest German garden, you who, with your climate, have a real need of shade?"

7. Unlike the English or French, the Italians have no political prejudices; they all know by heart the line of La Fontaine: —

Notre ennemi c'est notre M.

Aristocracy, supported by the priest and a biblical state of society, is a worn-out illusion which only makes them smile. In return, an Italian needs a stay of three months in France to realise that a draper may be a conservative.

8. As a last trait of character I would mention intolerance in discussion, and anger as soon as they do not find an argument ready to hand, to throw out against that of their adversary. At that point they visibly turn pale. It is one form of their extreme sensibility, but it is not one of its most amiable forms: consequently it is one of those that I am most willing to admit as proof of the existence of sensibility.

I wanted to see love without end, and, after considerable difficulty, I succeeded in being introduced this evening to Chevalier C — and his mistress, with whom he has lived for fifty-four years. I left the box of these charming old people, my heart melted; there I saw the art of being happy, an art ignored by so many young people.

Two months ago I saw Monsignor R — , by whom I was well received, because I brought him some copies of the Minerve. He was at his country house with Madame D — , whom he is still pleased, after thirty-four years, "avvicinare," as they say. She is still beautiful, but there is a touch of melancholy in this household. People attribute it to the loss of a son, who was poisoned long ago by her husband.

Here, to be in love does not mean, as at Paris, to see one's mistress for a quarter of an hour every week, and for the rest of the time to obtain a look or a shake of the hand: the lover, the happy lover, passes four or five hours every day with the woman he loves. He talks to her about his actions at law, his English garden, his hunting parties, his prospects, etc. There is the completest, the most tender intimacy. He speaks to her with the familiar "tu," even in the presence of her husband and everywhere.

A young man of this country, one very ambitious as he believed, was called to a high position at Vienna (nothing less than ambassador). But he could not get used to his stay abroad. At the end of six months he said good-bye to his job, and returned to be happy in his mistress's box at the opera.

Such continual intercourse would be inconvenient in France, where one must display a certain degree of affectation, and where your mistress can quite well say to you: "Monsieur So-and-so, you're glum this evening; you don't say a word." In Italy it is only a matter of telling the woman you love everything that passes through your head — you must actually think aloud. There is a certain nervous state which results from intimacy; freedom provokes freedom, and is only to be got in this way. But there is one great inconvenience; you find that love in this way paralyses all your tastes and renders all the other occupations of your life insipid. Such love is the best substitute for passion.

Our friends at Paris, who are still at the stage of trying to conceive that it's possible to be a Persian (71), not knowing what to say, will cry out that such manners are indecent. To begin with, I am only an historian; and secondly, I reserve to myself the right to show one day, by dint of solid reasoning, that as regards manners and fundamentally, Paris is not superior to Bologna. Quite unconsciously these poor people are still repeating their twopence-halfpenny catechism.

12 July, 1821. There is nothing odious in the society of Bologna. At Paris the rôle of a deceived husband is execrable; here (at Bologna) it is nothing — there are no deceived husbands. Manners are the same, it is only hate that is missing; the recognised lover is always the husband's friend, and this friendship, which has been cemented by reciprocal services, quite often survives other interests. Most love-affairs last five or six years, many for ever. People part at last, when they no longer find it sweet to tell each other everything, and when the first month of the rupture is over, there is no bitterness.

January, 1822. The ancient mode of the cavaliere servente, imported into Italy by Philip II, along with Spanish pride and manners, has entirely fallen into disuse in the large towns. I know of only one exception, and that's Calabria, where the eldest brother always takes orders, marries his younger brother, sets up in the service of his sister-in-law and becomes at the same time her lover.

Napoleon banished libertinism from upper Italy, and even from here (Naples).

The morals of the present generation of pretty women shame their mothers; they are more favourable to passion-love, but physical love has lost a great deal.

CHAPTER L

LOVE IN THE UNITED STATES (41)

A FREE government is a government which does no harm to its citizens, but which, on the contrary, gives them security and tranquillity. But 'tis a long cry from this to happiness. That a man must find for himself; for he must be a gross creature who thinks himself perfectly happy, because he enjoys security and tranquillity. We mix these things up in Europe, especially in Italy. Accustomed as we are to governments, which do us harm, it seems to us that to be delivered from them would be supreme happiness; in this we are like invalids, worn out with the pain of our sufferings. The example of America shows us just the contrary. There government discharges its office quite well, and does harm to no one. But we have been far removed, for very many centuries, thanks to the unhappy state of Europe, from any actual experience of the kind, and now destiny, as if to disconcert and give the lie to all our philosophy, or rather to accuse it of not knowing all the elements of human nature, shows us, that just when the unhappiness of bad government is wanting to America, the Americans are wanting to themselves.

One is inclined to say that the source of sensibility is dried up in this people. They are just, they are reasonable, but they are essentially not happy.

Is the Bible, that is to say, the ridiculous consequences and rules of conduct which certain fantastic wits deduce from that collection of poems and songs, sufficient to cause all this unhappiness? To me it seems a very considerable effect for such a cause.

M. de Volney related that, being at table in the country at the house of an honest American, a man in easy circumstances, and surrounded by children already grown up, there entered into the dining-room a young man. "Good day, William," said the father of the family; "sit down." The traveller enquired who this young man was. "He's my second son."

“Where does he come from?”—” From Canton.”

The arrival of one of his sons from the end of the world caused no more sensation than that.

All their attention seems employed on finding a reasonable arrangement of life, and on avoiding all inconveniences. When finally they arrive at the moment of reaping the fruit of so much care and of the spirit of order so long maintained, there is no life left for enjoyment.

One might say that the descendants of Penn never read that line, which looks like their history: —

Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.

The young people of both sexes, when winter comes, which in this country, as in Russia, is the gay season, go sleighing together day and night over the snow, often going quite gaily distances of fifteen or twenty miles, and without anyone to look after them. No inconvenience ever results from it.

They have the physical gaiety of youth, which soon passes away with the warmth of their blood, and is over at twenty-five. But I find no passions which give pleasure. In America there is such a reasonable habit of mind that crystallisation has been rendered impossible.

I admire such happiness, but I do not envy it; it is like the happiness of human beings of a different and lower species. I augur much better things from Florida and Southern America.

What strengthens my conjecture about the North is the absolute lack of artists and writers. The United States have not yet (42) sent us over one scene of a tragedy, one picture, or one life of Washington. than English protestantism; it permits him at least to dance on Sunday; and one day of pleasure in the seven is a great thing for the agricultural labourer, who works hard for the other six.

CHAPTER LI

LOVE IN PROVENCE UP TO THE CONQUEST OF TOULOUSE, IN 1328, BY THE BARBARIANS FROM THE NORTH

LOVE took a singular form in Provence, from the year 1100 up to 1328. It had an established legislation for the relations of the two sexes in love, as severe and as exactly followed as the laws of Honour could be to-day. The laws of Love began by putting completely aside the sacred rights of husbands. They presuppose no hypocrisy. These laws, taking human nature such as it is, were of the kind to produce a great deal of happiness.

There was an official manner of declaring oneself a woman's lover, and another of being accepted by her as lover. After so many months of making one's court in a certain fashion, one obtained her leave to kiss her hand. Society, still young, took pleasure in formalities and ceremonies, which were then a sign of civilisation, but which to-day would bore us to death. The same trait is to be found in the language of Provence, in the difficulty and interlacing of its rhymes, in its masculine and feminine words to express the same object, and indeed in the infinite number of its poets. Everything formal in society, which is so insipid to-day, then had all the freshness and savour of novelty.

After having kissed a woman's hand, one was promoted from grade to grade by force of merit, and without extraordinary promotion.

It should be remarked, however, that if the husbands were always left out of the question, on the other hand the official promotion of the lover stopped at what we should call the sweetness of a most tender friendship between persons of a different sex. But after several months or several years of probation, in which a woman might become perfectly sure of the character and discretion of a man, and he enjoy at her hand all the prerogatives and

outward signs which the tenderest friendship can give, her virtue must surely have had to thank his friendship for many a violent alarm.

I have spoken of extraordinary promotion, because a woman could have more than one lover, but one only in the higher grades. It seems that the rest could not be promoted much beyond that degree of friendship which consisted in kissing her hand and seeing her every day. All that is left to us of this singular civilisation is in verse, and in a verse that is rhymed in a very fantastic and difficult way; and it need not surprise us if the notions, which we draw from the ballads of the troubadours, are vague and not at all precise. Even a marriage contract in verse has been found. After the conquest in 1328, as a result of its heresy, the Pope, on several occasions, ordered everything written in the vulgar tongue to be burnt. Italian cunning proclaimed Latin the only language worthy of such clever people. ‘Twere a most advantageous measure could we renew it in 1822.

Such publicity and such official ordering of love seem at first sight to ill-accord with real passion. But if a lady said to her lover: “Go for your love of me and visit the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ at Jerusalem; there you will pass three years and then return” — the lover was gone immediately: to hesitate a moment would have covered him with the same ignominy as would nowadays a sign of wavering on a point of honour. The language of this people has an extreme fineness in expressing the most fugitive shades of feeling. Another sign that their manners were well advanced on the road of real civilisation is that, scarcely out of the horrors of the Middle Ages and of Feudalism, when force was everything, we see the feebler sex less tyrannised over than it is to-day with the approval of the law; we see the poor and feeble creatures, who have the most to lose in love and whose charms disappear the quickest, mistresses over the destiny of the men who approach them. An exile of three years in Palestine, the passage from a civilisation full of gaiety to the fanaticism and boredom of the Crusaders’ camp, must have been a painful duty for any other than an inspired Christian. What can a woman do to her lover who has basely deserted her at Paris?

I can only see one answer to be made here: at Paris no self-respecting woman has a lover. Certainly prudence has much more right to counsel the woman of to-day not to abandon herself to passion-love. But does not

another prudence, which, of course, I am far from approving, counsel her to make up for it with physical love? Our hypocrisy and asceticism imply no homage to virtue; for you can never oppose nature with impunity: there is only less happiness on earth and infinitely less generous inspiration.

A lover who, after ten years of intimate intercourse, deserted his poor mistress, because he began to notice her two-and-thirty years, was lost to honour in this lovable Provence; he had no resource left but to bury himself in the solitude of a cloister. In those days it was to the interest of a man, not only of generosity but even of prudence, to make display of no more passion than he really had. We conjecture all this; for very few remains are left to give us any exact notions....

We must judge manners as a whole, by certain particular facts. You know the anecdote of the poet who had offended his lady: after two years of despair she deigned at last to answer his many messages and let him know that if he had one of his nails torn off and had this nail presented to her by fifty loving and faithful knights, she might perhaps pardon him. The poet made all haste to submit to the painful operation. Fifty knights, who stood in their ladies' good graces, went to present this nail with all imaginable pomp to the offended beauty. It was as imposing a ceremony as the entry of a prince of the blood into one of the royal towns. The lover, dressed in the garb of a penitent, followed his nail from afar. The lady, after having watched the ceremony, which was of great length, right through, deigned to pardon him; he was restored to all the sweets of his former happiness. History tells that they spent long and happy years together. Sure it is that two such years of unhappiness prove a real passion and would have given birth to it, had it not existed before in that high degree.

I could cite twenty anecdotes which show us everywhere gallantry, pleasing, polished and conducted between the two sexes on principles of justice. I say gallantry, because in all ages passion-love is an exception, rather curious than frequent, a something we cannot reduce to rules. In Provence every calculation, everything within the domain of reason, was founded on justice and the equality of rights between the two sexes; and I admire it for this reason especially, that it eliminates unhappiness as far as possible. The absolute monarchy under Lewis XV, on the contrary, had come to make baseness and perfidy the fashion in these relations.

Although this charming Provençal language, so full of delicacy and so laboured in its rhymes, was probably not the language of the people, the manners of the upper classes had permeated the lower classes, which in Provence were at that time far from coarse, for they enjoyed a great deal of comfort. They were in the first enjoyment of a very prosperous and very valuable trade. The inhabitants of the shores of the Mediterranean had just realised (in the ninth century) that to engage in commerce, by risking a few ships on this sea, was less troublesome and almost as amusing as following some little feudal lord and robbing the passers-by on the neighbouring high-road. Soon after, the Provençals of the tenth century learnt from the Arabs that there are sweeter pleasures than pillage, violence and war.

One must think of the Mediterranean as the home of European civilisation. The happy shores of this lovely sea, so favoured in its climate, were still more favoured in the prosperous state of their inhabitants and in the absence of all religion or miserable legislation. The eminently gay genius of the Provençals had by then passed through the Christian religion, without being altered by it.

We see a lively image of a like effect from a like cause in the cities of Italy, whose history has come down to us more distinctly and which have had the good fortune besides of bequeathing to us Dante, Petrarch and the art of painting.

The Provençals have not left us a great poem like the Divine Comedy, in which are reflected all the peculiarities of the manners of the time. They had, it seems to me, less passion and much more gaiety than the Italians. They learnt this pleasant way of taking life from their neighbours, the Moors of Spain. Love reigned with joy, festivity and pleasure in the castles of happy Provence.

Have you seen at the opera the finale of one of Rossini's beautiful operettas? On the stage all is gaiety, beauty, ideal magnificence. We are miles away from all the mean side of human nature. The opera is over, the curtain falls, the spectators go out, the great chandelier is drawn up, the lights are extinguished. The house is filled with the smell of lamps hastily put out; the curtain is pulled up half-way, and you see dirty, ill-dressed roughs tumble on

to the stage; they bustle about it in a hideous way, occupying the place of the young women who filled it with their graces only a moment ago.

Such for the kingdom of Provence was the effect of the conquest of Toulouse by the army of Crusaders. Instead of love, of grace, of gaiety, we have the Barbarians from the North and Saint Dominic. I shall not darken these pages with a blood-curdling account of the horrors of the Inquisition in all the zeal of its early days. As for the Barbarians, they were our fathers; they killed and plundered everywhere; they destroyed, for the pleasure of destroying, whatever they could not carry off; a savage madness animated them against everything that showed the least trace of civilisation; above all, they understood not a word of that beautiful southern language; and that redoubled their fury. Highly superstitious and guided by the terrible S. Dominic, they thought to gain Heaven by killing the Provençals. For the latter all was over; no more love, no more gaiety, no more poetry. Less than twenty years after the conquest (1335), they were almost as barbarous and as coarse as the French, as our fathers.

Whence had lighted on this corner of the world that charming form of civilisation, which for two centuries was the happiness of the upper classes of society? Apparently from the Moors of Spain.

CHAPTER LII (39)

PROVENCE IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

I AM going to translate an anecdote from the Provençal manuscripts. The facts, of which you are going to read, happened about the year 1180 and the history was written about 1250. The anecdote, to be sure, is very well known: the style especially gives the colour of the society which produced it.

I beg that I be allowed to translate it word for word, and without seeking in any way after the elegance of the language of to-day.

"My Lord Raymond of Roussillon was a valiant baron, as you know, and he took to wife my Lady Marguerite, the most beautiful woman of all her time and one of the most endowed with all good qualities, with all worth and with all courtesy. Now it happened that William of Cabstaing came to the Court of my Lord Raymond of Roussillon, presented himself to him and begged, if it so pleased him, that he might be a page in his Court. My Lord Raymond, who saw that he was fair and of good grace, told him that he was welcome and that he might dwell at his Court. Thus William dwelt with him, and succeeded in bearing himself so gently that great and small loved him; and he succeeded in placing himself in so good a light that my Lord Raymond wished him to be page to my Lady Marguerite, his wife; and so it was. Then William set himself to merit yet more both in word and deed. But now, as is wont to happen in love, it happened that Love wished to take hold of my Lady Marguerite and to inflame her thoughts. So much did the person of William please her, both his word and his air, that one day she could not restrain herself from saying to him: 'Now listen, William, if a woman showed you likelihood of love, tell me would you dare love her well?'

'Yes, that I would, madam, provided only that the likelihood were the truth.'—' By S. John,' said the lady, 'you have answered well, like a man of valour; but at present I wish to try you, whether you can understand and

distinguish in matter of likelihood the difference between what is true and what is not.'

"When William heard these words he answered: 'My lady, it is as it shall please you.'

"He began to be pensive, and at once Love sought war with him; and the thoughts that love mingled with his entered into the depth of his heart, and straightway he was of the servants of Love and began to 'find ' little couplets, gracious and gay, and tunes for the dance and tunes with sweet words, by which he was well received, and the more so by reason of her for whom he sang. Now Love, that grants to his servants their reward, when he pleases, wished to grant William the price of his; and behold, he began to take hold of the lady with such keen thoughts and meditations on love that neither night nor day could she rest, thinking of the valour and prowess that had been so beautifully disposed and set in William.

"One day it happened that the lady took William and said to him: 'William, come now, tell me, have you up to this hour taken note of our likelihood, whether it truly is or lies?' William answered: 'My lady, so help me God, from that moment onward that I have been your servant, no thought has been able to enter my heart but that you were the best woman that was ever born, and the truest in the world and the most likely. So I think, and shall think, all my life.' And the lady answered: 'William, I tell you that, if God help me, you shall never be deceived by me, and that what you think shall not prove vain or nothing.' And she opened her arms and kissed him softly in the room where they two sat together, and they began their "druerie and straightway there wanted not those, whom God holds in wrath, who set themselves to talk and gossip of their love, by reason of the songs that William made, saying that he had set his love on my Lady Marguerite, and so indiscriminately did they talk that the matter came to the ears of my Lord Raymond. Then he was sorely pained and grievously sad, first that he must lose his familiar squire, whom he loved so well, and more still for his wife's shame.

"One day it happened that William went out to hunt with his hawks and a single squire; and my Lord Raymond made enquiry where he was; and a groom answered him that he had gone out to hawk, and one who knew

added that it was in such-and-such a spot. Immediately Raymond took arms, which he hid, and had his horse brought to him, and all alone took his way towards the spot whither William had gone: by dint of hard riding he found him. When William saw him approach he was greatly astonished, and at once evil thoughts came to him, and he advanced to meet him and said: ‘My lord, welcome. Why are you thus alone?’ My Lord Raymond answered: ‘William, because I have come to find you to enjoy myself with you. Have you caught anything?’—’ I have caught nothing, my lord, because I have found nothing; and he who finds little will not catch much, as the saying goes.’—’ Enough of this talk,’ said my Lord Raymond, ‘ and by the faith you owe me, tell me the truth on all the questions that I may wish to ask.’—’ By God, my lord,’ said William, ‘if there is ought to say, certainly to you shall I say it.’ Then said my Lord Raymond: ‘I wish for no subtleties here, but you must answer me in all fullness on everything that I shall ask you.’—’ My lord, as it shall please you to ask,’ said William, ‘so shall I tell you the truth.’ And my Lord Raymond asked: ‘William, as you value God and the holy faith, have you a mistress for whom you sing and for whom Love constrains you?’ William answered: ‘My lord, and how else should I be singing, if Love did not urge me on? Know the truth, my lord, that Love has me wholly in his power.’ Raymond answered: ‘ I can well believe it, for otherwise you could not sing so well; but I wish to know, if you please, who is your lady.’—’ Ah, my lord, in God’s name,’ said William, ‘see what you ask me. You know too well that a man must not name his lady, and that Bernard of Ventadour says: —

“‘In one thing my reason serves me,

That never man has asked me of my joy,

But I have lied to him thereof willingly.

For this does not seem to me good doctrine,

But rather folly or a child’s act,

That whoever is well treated in love

Should wish to open his heart thereon to another man,

Unless he can serve him or help him.'

"My Lord Raymond answered: 'And I give you my word that I will serve you according to my power.' So said Raymond, and William answered him: 'My lord, you must know that I love the sister of my Lady Marguerite, your wife, and that I believe I have exchange with her of love. Now that you know it, I beg you to come to my aid and at least not to prejudice me.'—' Take my word,' said Raymond, 'for I swear to you and engage myself to you that I will use all my power for you.' And then he gave his word, and when he had given it to him Raymond said to him: 'I wish us to go to her castle, for it is near by.'—' And I beg we may do so, in God's name,' said William. And so they took their road towards the castle of Liet. And when they came to the castle they were well received by En Robert of Tarascon, who was the husband of my Lady Agnes, the sister of my Lady Marguerite, and by my Lady Agnes herself. And my Lord Raymond took my Lady Agnes by the hand and led her into her chamber, and they sat down on the bed. And my Lord Raymond said: 'Now tell me, my sister-in-law, by the faith that you owe me, are you in love with Love?' And she said: 'Yes, my lord.'—' And whose?' said he. 'Oh, that I do not tell you,' answered she; 'what means this parleying?'

"In the end, so insistently did he demand that she said that she loved William of Cabstaing; this she said because she saw William sad and pensive and she knew well that he loved her sister; and so she feared that Raymond might have had evil thoughts of William. Such a reply gave great joy to Raymond. Agnes related it all to her husband, and her husband answered her that she had done well and gave her his word that she was at liberty to do and say anything that could save William. Agnes was not wanting to him. She called William all alone into her chamber, and remained so long with him that Raymond thought he must have had the pleasures of love with her; and all this pleased him, and he began to think that what he had been told of William was untrue and random talk. Agnes and William came out of her chamber, supper was prepared and they supped with great gaiety. And after supper Agnes had the bed of her two neighbours prepared by the door of her

chamber, and so well did the Lady and William act their parts that Raymond believed he was with her.

“And the next day they dined in the castle with great joy, and after dinner they set out with all the honours of a noble leave-taking, and came to Roussillon. And as soon as Raymond could, he separated from William and went away to his wife, and related to her all that he had seen of William and her sister, for which his wife was sorely grieved all night. And the next day she had William summoned to her and received him ill, and called him false friend and traitor. And William cried to her for pity, as a man who had done nought of that with which she charged him, and related to her all that had passed, word for word. And the lady sent for her sister and from her she learnt that William had done no wrong. And therefore she called him and bade him make a song by which he should show that he loved no woman but her, and then he made the song which says: —

“The sweet thoughts

That Love often gives me.

“And when Raymond of Roussillon heard the song that William had made for his wife, he made him come to speak with him some way from the castle, and cut off his head, which he put in a bag; he drew out the heart from the body and put it with the head. He went back to the castle; he had the heart roasted and brought to his wife at table and made her eat it without her knowing. When she had eaten it, Raymond rose up and told his wife that what she had just eaten was the heart of Lord William of Cabstaing, and showed her his head and asked her if the heart had been good to eat. And she heard what he said, and saw and recognised the head of Lord William. She answered him and said that the heart had been so good and savoury, that never other meat or other drink could take away from her mouth the taste that the heart of Lord William had left there. And Raymond ran at her with a sword. She took to flight, threw herself down from a balcony and broke her head.

“This became known through all Catalonia and through all the lands of the King of Aragon. King Alphonse and all the barons of these countries had great grief and sorrow for the death of Lord William and of the woman whom Raymond had so basely done to death. They made war on him with fire and sword. King Alphonse of Aragon having taken Raymond’s castle, had William and his lady laid in a monument before the door of a church in a borough named Perpignac. All perfect lovers of either sex prayed God for their souls. The King of Aragon took Raymond and let him die in prison, and gave all his goods to the relatives of William and to the relatives of the woman who died for him.”

CHAPTER LIII

ARABIA

This beneath the dusky tent of the Bedouin Arab that we seek the model and the home of true love. There, as elsewhere, solitude and a fine climate have kindled the noblest passion of the human heart — that passion which must give as much happiness as it feels, in order to be happy itself.

In order that love may be seen in all the fullness of its power over the human heart, equality must be established as far as possible between the mistress and her lover. It does not exist, this equality, in our poor West; a woman deserted is unhappy or dishonoured. Under the Arab's tent faith once plighted cannot be broken. Contempt and death immediately follow that crime.

Generosity is held so sacred by this people, that you may steal, in order to give. For the rest, every day danger stares them in the face, and life flows on ever, so to speak, in a passionate solitude. Even in company the Arabs speak little.

Nothing changes for the inhabitant of the desert; there everything is eternal and motionless. This singular mode of life, of which, owing to my ignorance, I can give but a poor sketch, has probably existed since the time of Homer. It is described for the first time about the year 600 of our era, two centuries before Charlemagne.

Clearly it is we who were the barbarians in the eyes of the East, when we went to trouble them with our crusades. Also we owe all that is in our manner to these crusades and to the Moors of Spain. If we compare ourselves with the Arabs, the proud, prosaic man will smile with pity. Our arts are very much superior to theirs, our systems of law to all appearance still more superior. But I doubt if we beat them in the art of domestic

happiness — we have always lacked loyalty and simplicity. In family relations the deceiver is the first to suffer. For him the feeling of safety is departed; always unjust, he is always afraid.

In the earliest of their oldest historical monuments we can see the Arabs divided from all antiquity into a large number of independent tribes, wandering about the desert. As soon as these tribes were able to supply, with more or less ease, the simplest human wants, their way of life was already more or less refined. Generosity was the same on every side; only according to the tribe's degree of wealth it found expression, now in the quarter of goat's flesh necessary for the support of life, now in the gift of a hundred camels, occasioned by some family connexion or reasons of hospitality.

The heroic age of the Arabs, that in which these generous hearts burnt unsullied by any affectation of fine wit or refined sentiment, was that which preceded Mohammed; it corresponds to the fifth century of our era, to the foundations of Venice and to the reign of Clovis. I beg European pride to compare the Arab love-songs, which have come down to us, and the noble system of life revealed in the Thousand, and One Nights, with the disgusting horrors that stain every page of Gregory of Tours, the historian of Clovis, and of Eginhard, the historian of Charlemagne.

Mohammed was a puritan; he wished to prescribe pleasures which do no one any harm; he has killed love in those countries which have accepted Islamism. It is for this reason that his religion has always been less observed in Arabia, its cradle, than in all the other Mohammedan countries.

The French brought away from Egypt four folio volumes, entitled The Book of Songs. These volumes contain: —

1. Biographies of the poets who composed the songs.

2. The songs themselves. In them the poet sings of everything that interests him; when he has spoken of his mistress he praises his swift coursers and his bow. These songs were often love-letters from their author, giving the object of his love a faithful picture of all that passed in his heart. Sometimes they tell of cold nights when he has been obliged to burn his bow and arrows. The Arabs are a nation without houses.

3. Biographies of the musicians who have composed the music for these songs.

4. Finally, the notation of the musical setting; for us these settings are hieroglyphics. The music will be for ever unknown, and anyhow, it would not please us.

There is another collection entitled “The History of those Arabs who have died for Love.

In order to feel at home in the midst of remains which owe so much of their interest to their antiquity, and to appreciate the singular beauty of the manners of which they let us catch a glimpse, we must go to history for enlightenment on certain points.

From all time, and especially before Mohammed, the Arabs betook themselves to Mecca in order to make the tour of the Caaba or house of Abraham. I have seen at London a very exact model of the Holy City. There are seven or eight hundred houses with terraces on the roofs, set in the midst of a sandy desert devoured by the sun. At one extremity of the city is found an immense building, in form almost a square; this building surrounds the Caaba. It is composed of a long course of colonnades, necessary under an Arabian sun for the performance of the sacred procession. This colonnade is very important in the history of the manners and poetry of the Arabs; it was apparently for centuries the one place where men and women met together. Pell-mell, with slow steps, and reciting in chorus their sacred songs, they walked round the Caaba — it is a walk of three-quarters of an hour. The procession was repeated many times in the same day; this was the sacred rite for which men and women came forth from all parts of the desert. It is under the colonnade of the Caaba that Arab manners became polished. A contest between the father and the lover soon came to be established — in love-lyrics the lover discovered his passion to the girl, jealously guarded by brothers and father, as at her side he walked in the sacred procession. The generous and sentimental habits of this people existed already in the camp; but Arab gallantry seems to me to have been born in the shadow of the Caaba, which is also the home of their literature. At first, passion was expressed with simplicity and vehemence, just as the poet felt it; later the poet, instead of seeking to touch his mistress, aimed at fine writing; then

followed that affectation which the Moors introduced into Spain and which still to-day spoils the books of that people.

I find a touching proof of the Arab's respect for the weaker sex in his ceremony of divorce. The woman, during the absence of her husband from whom she wished to separate, opened the tent and drew it up, taking care to place the opening on the opposite side to that which she had formerly occupied. This simple ceremony separated husband and wife for ever.

FRAGMENTS

Gathered and translated from an Arabic Collection entitled: The Divan of Love (39)

Compiled by Ebn-Abi-Hadglat. (Manuscripts of the King's Library, Nos. 1461 and 1462.)

MOHAMMED, son of Djaafar Elahouazadi, relates that Djamil being sick of the illness of which he died, Elabas, son of Sohail, visited him and found him ready to give up the ghost. "O son of Sohail," said Djamil to him, "what do you think of a man who has never drunk wine, who has never made illicit gain, who has never unrighteously given death to any living creature that God has forbidden us to kill, and who confesses that there is no other God but Allah and that Mohammed is his prophet?"

"I think," answered Ben Sohail, "that such a man will be saved and will gain Paradise; but who is he, this man of whom you talk?"

"'Tis I," answered Djamil. "I did not think that you professed the faith," returned Ben Sohail, "and moreover, for twenty years now you have been making love to Bothaina, and celebrating her in your verses."

"Here I am," answered Djamil, "at my first day in the other world and at my last in this, and I pray that the mercy of our Master Mohammed may not be extended to me at the day of judgment, if ever I have laid hands on Bothaina for anything reprehensible."

This Djamil and Bothaina, his mistress, both belonged to the Benou-Azra, who are a tribe famous in love among all the tribes of the Arabs. Also their manner of loving has passed into a proverb, and God has made no other creatures as tender in love as they.

Sahid, son of Agba, one day asked an Arab: “Of what people are you?”

“I am of the people that die when they love,” replied the Arab. “Then you are of the tribe of Azra,” added Sahid. “Yes, by the Master of the Caaba,” replied the Arab. “Whence comes it that you love in this manner?” Sahid asked next. “Our women are beautiful and our young men are chaste,” answered the Arab.

One day someone asked Aroua-Ben-Hezam: “Is it really true what people tell of you, that you of all mankind have the heart most tender in love?”

“Yes, by Allah, it is true,” answered Aroua, “and I have known in my tribe thirty young men whom death has carried off and who had no other sickness but love.”

An Arab of the Benou-Fazarat said one day to an Arab of the Benou-Azra: “You, Benou-Azra, you think it a sweet and noble death to die of love; but therein is a manifest weakness and stupidity; and those whom you take for men of great heart are only madmen and soft creatures.”

“You would not talk like that,” the Arab of the tribe of Azra answered him, “if you had seen the great black eyes of our women darting fire from beneath the veil of their long lashes, if you had seen them smile and their teeth gleaming between their brown lips!”

Abou-el-Hassan, Ali, son of Abdalla, Elzagouni, relates the following story: A Mussulman loved to distraction the daughter of a Christian. He was obliged to make a journey to a foreign country with a friend, to whom he had confided his love. His business prolonged his stay in this country, and being attacked there by a mortal sickness, he said to his friend: “Behold, my time approaches; no more in the world shall I meet her whom I love, and I fear, if I die a Mussulman, that I shall not meet her again in the other life.” He turned Christian and died. His friend betook himself to the young Christian

woman, whom he found sick. She said to him: “I shall not see my friend any more in this world, but I want to be with him in the other; therefore I confess that there is no other God but Allah, and that Mohammed is the prophet of God.” Thereupon she died, and may God’s mercy be upon her.

Eltemimi relates that there was in the tribe of the Arabs of Tagleb a Christian girl of great riches who was in love with a young Mussulman. She offered him her fortune and all her treasures without succeeding in making him love her. When she had lost all hope she gave an artist a hundred dinars, to make her a statue of the young man she loved. The artist made the statue, and when the girl got it, she placed it in a certain spot where she went every day. There she would begin by kissing this statue, and then sat down beside it and spent the rest of the day in weeping. When the evening came she would bow to the statue and retire. This she did for a long time. The young man chanced to die; she desired to see him and to embrace him dead, after which she returned to her statue, bowed to it, kissed it as usual, and lay down beside it. When day came, they found her dead, stretching out her hand towards some lines of writing, which she had written before she died.

Oueddah, of the land of Yamen, was renowned among the Arabs for his beauty. He and Om-el-Bonain, daughter of Abd-el-Aziz, son of Merouan, while still only children, were even then so much in love that they could not bear to be parted from each other for a moment. When Om-eL-Bonain became the wife of Oualid-Ben-Abd-el-Malek, Oueddah became mad for grief. After remaining a long time in a state of distraction and suffering, he betook himself to Syria and began every day to prowl around the house of Oualid, son of Malek, without at first finding the means to attain his desire. In the end, he made the acquaintance of a girl, whom he succeeded in attaching to himself by dint of his perseverance and his pains. When he thought he could rely on her, he asked her if she knew Om-el-Bonain. “To be sure I do,” answered the girl, “seeing she is my mistress.”

“Listen,” continued Oueddah, “your mistress is my cousin, and if you care to tell her about me, you will certainly give her pleasure.”

“I’ll tell her willingly,” answered the girl. And thereupon she ran straight to Om-el-Bonain to tell her about Oueddah. “Take care what you say,” cried Om-el-Bonain. “What? Oueddah is alive?”

“Certainly he is,” said the girl. “Go and tell him,” Om-el-Bonain went on, “on no account to depart until a messenger comes to him from me.” Then she took measures to get Oueddah brought to her, where she kept him hidden in a coffer. She let him come out to be with her when she thought it safe; but if someone arrived who might have seen him, she made him get inside the coffer again.

It happened one day that a pearl was brought to Oualid and he said to one of his attendants: “Take this pearl and give it to Om-el-Bonain.” The attendant took the pearl and gave it to Om-el-Bonain. As he was not announced, he entered where she dwelt at a time when she was with Oueddah, and thus he was able to throw a glance into Om-el-Bonain’s apartment without her noticing him. Oualid’s attendant fulfilled his mission and asked something of Om-el-Bonain for the jewel he had brought her. She refused him with severity and reprimanded him. The attendant went out incensed against her, and went to tell Oualid what he had seen, describing the coffer into which he had seen Oueddah enter. “You lie, bastard slave! You lie,” said Oualid. And he ran in haste to Om-el-Bonain. There were several coffers in her apartment; he sat down on the one in which Oueddah was hid and which the slave had described, saying: “Give me one of these coffers.”

“They are all yours, as much as I myself,” answered Om-el-Bonain. “Then,” continued Oualid, “I would like to have the one on which I am seated.”

“There are some things in it that only a woman needs,” said Om-el-Bonain. “It is not them, it is the coffer I desire,” added Oualid. “It is yours,” she answered. Oualid had the coffer taken away at once, and summoned two slaves, whom he ordered to dig a pit in the earth down to the depth where they would find water. Then placing his mouth against the coffer: “I have heard something of you,” he cried. “If I have heard the truth, may all trace of you be lost, may all memory of you be buried. If they have told me false I do no harm by entombing a coffer: it is only the funeral of a box.” Then he had the coffer pushed into the pit and covered with the stones and the earth which had been dug up. From that time Om-el-Bonain never ceased to frequent this spot and to weep, until one day they found her there lifeless, her face pressed towards the earth.

CHAPTER LIV (43)

OF THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

IN the actual education of girls, which is the fruit of chance and the most idiotic pride, we allow their most shining faculties, and those most fertile in happiness for themselves and for us, to lie fallow. But what man is there, who at least once in his life has not exclaimed: —

... a woman always knows enough

If but her range of understanding reaches

To telling one from t'other, coat and breeches.

[Les Femmes Savantes, Act II, Scene VII.)

[Translation of C. H. Page, New York, 1908.]

At Paris, this is the highest praise for a young girl of a marriageable age: "There is so much that's sweet in her character, and she's as gentle as a lamb." Nothing has more effect on the idiots looking out for wives. But see them two years later, lunching tête-à-tête with their wives some dull day, hats on and surrounded by three great lackeys!

We have seen a law carried in the United States, in 1818, which condemns to thirty-four strokes of the cat anyone teaching a Virginian negro to read. Nothing could be more consequent and more reasonable than a law of this kind.

Were the United States of America themselves more useful to the motherland when they were her slaves or since they have become her equals? If the work of a

free man is worth two or three times that of a man reduced to slavery, why should not the same be true of that man's thought?

If we dared, we would give girls the education of a slave; and the proof of this is that if they know anything useful, it is against our wish we teach it them.

"But they turn against us the little education which unhappily they get hold of," some husbands might say. No doubt; and Napoleon was also quite right not to give arms to the National Guard; and the reactionaries are also quite right to proscribe the monitorial system (44). Arm a man, and then continue to oppress him, and you will see that he can be so perverse as to turn his arms against you, as soon as he can.

Even if it were permissible to bring girls up like idiots, on Ave Marias and lewd songs, as they did in the convents of 1770, there would still be several little objections: —

1. In the case of the husband's death, they are called upon to manage the young family.

2. As mothers, they give their male children, the young tyrants of the future, their first education, that education which forms the character, and accustoms the soul to seek happiness by this route rather than by that — and the choice is always an accomplished fact by four or five.

3. In spite of all our pride, the advice of the inevitable partner of our whole life has great influence on those domestic affairs on which our happiness depends so particularly; for, in the absence of passion, happiness is based on the absence of small everyday vexations. Not that we would willingly accord this advice the least influence, but she may repeat the same thing to us for twenty years together. Whose is the spirit of such Roman fortitude as to resist the same idea repeated throughout a whole lifetime? The world is full of husbands who let themselves be led, but it is from weakness and not from

a feeling for justice and equality. As they yield perforce, the wife is always tempted to abuse her power, and it is sometimes necessary to abuse power in order to keep it.

4. Finally, in love, and during a period which, in southern countries, often comprises twelve or fifteen years, and those the fairest of our life, our happiness is entirely in the hands of the woman we love. One moment of untimely pride can make us for ever miserable, and how should a slave raised up to a throne not be tempted to abuse her power? This is the origin of women's false refinement and pride. Of course, there is nothing more useless than these pleas: men are despots and we see what respect other despots show to the wisest counsels. A man who is all-powerful relishes only one sort of advice, the advice of those that tell him to increase his power. Where are poor young girls to find a Quiroga or a Riego (45) to give the despots, who oppress them, and degrade them the better to oppress them, that salutary advice, whose just recompense are favours and orders instead of Porlier's (45) gallows?

If a revolution of this kind needs several centuries, it is because, by a most unlucky chance, all our first experiences must necessarily contradict the truth. Illuminate a girl's mind, form her character, give her, in short, a good education in the true sense of the word — remarking sooner or later her own superiority over other women, she becomes a pedant, that is to say, the most unpleasant and the most degraded creature that there is in the world. There isn't one of us who wouldn't prefer a servant to a savante, if we had to pass our life with her.

Plant a young tree in the midst of a dense forest, deprived of air and sun by the closeness of the neighbouring trees: its leaves will be blighted, and it will get an overgrown and ridiculous shape — not its natural shape. We ought to plant the whole forest at once. What woman is there who is proud of knowing how to read?

Pedants have repeated to us for two thousand years that women were more quick and men more judicious, women more remarkable for delicacy of expression and men for stronger powers of concentration. A Parisian simpleton, who used once upon a time to take his walk in the gardens of Versailles, similarly concluded from all he saw that trees grow ready clipped.

I will allow that little girls have less physical strength than little boys: this must be conclusive as regards intellect; for everyone knows that Voltaire and d'Alembert were the first boxers of their age! Everyone agrees, that a little girl of ten is twenty times as refined as a little boy of the same age. Why, at twenty, is she a great idiot, awkward, timid, and afraid of a spider, while the little boy is a man of intellect?

Women only learn the things we do not wish to teach them, and only read the lessons taught them by experience of life. Hence the extreme disadvantage it is for them to be born in a very rich family; instead of coming into contact with beings who behave naturally to them, they find themselves surrounded by maidservants and governesses, who are already corrupted and blighted by wealth. There is nothing so foolish as a prince.

Young girls soon see that they are slaves and begin to look about them very early; they see everything, but they are too ignorant to see properly. A woman of thirty in France has not the acquired knowledge of a small boy of fifteen, a woman of fifty has not the reason of a man of twenty-five. Look at Madame de Sévigné admiring Louis XIV's most ridiculous actions. Look at the so have not time to equal a small boy of fifteen in acquired knowledge! Men must be judges, bankers, barristers, merchants, doctors, clergymen, etc., and yet they find time to read Fox's speeches and the Lusiad of Camoëns.

The Pekin magistrate, who hastens at an early hour to the law courts in order to find the means of imprisoning and ruining, in perfect good faith, a poor journalist who has incurred the displeasure of an Under-Secretary of State, with whom he had the honour of dining the day before, is surely as busy as his wife, who keeps her kitchen accounts, gets stockings made for her little daughter, sees her through her dancing and piano lessons, receives a visit from the vicar of the parish who brings her the Quotidienne, and then goes to choose a hat in the Rue de Richelieu and take a turn in the Tuileries.

In the midst of his noble occupations this magistrate still finds time to think of this walk his wife is taking in the Tuileries, and, if he were in as good odour with the Power that rules the universe as with that which rules the State, he would pray Heaven to grant women, for their own good, eight or ten hours more sleep. In the present condition of society, leisure, which for man is the source of all his happiness and all his riches, is for women so far

from being an advantage as to rank among those baneful liberties, from which the worthy magistrate would wish to help deliver us.

CHAPTER LV (43)

OBJECTIONS TO THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

“BUT women are charged with the petty labours of the household.” The Colonel of my regiment, M. S — , has four daughters, brought up on the best principles, which means that they work all day. When I come, they sing the music of Rossini, that I brought them from Naples. For the rest, they read the Bible of Royaumont, they learn what’s most foolish in history, that is to say, chronological tables and the verses of Le Ragois; they know a great deal of geography, embroider admirably — and I expect that each of these pretty little girls could earn, by her work, eight sous a day. Taking three hundred days, that means four hundred and eighty francs a year, which is less than is given to one of their masters. It is for four hundred and eighty francs a year that they lose for ever the time, during which it is granted to the human machine to acquire ideas.

“If women read with pleasure the ten or twelve good volumes that appear every year in Europe, they will soon give up the care of their children.”—’Tis as if we feared, by planting the shore of the ocean with trees, to stop the motion of the waves. It is not in this sense that education is all-powerful. Besides, for four hundred years the same objection has been offered to every sort of education. And yet a Parisian woman has more good qualities in 1820 than she ever had in 1720, the age of Law’s system and the Regency, and at that time the daughter of the richest farmer-general had a less good education than the daughter of the pettiest attorney gets to-day. Are her household duties less well performed as a result? Certainly not. And why? Because poverty, illness, shame, instinct, all force her to fulfil them. It is as if you said of an officer who is becoming too sociable, that he will forget how to handle his horse; you have to remember that he’ll break his arm the first time he’s slack in the saddle.

Knowledge, where it produces any had effects at all, does as much mischief to one sex as to the other. We shall never lack vanity, even in the completest absence of any reason for having it — look at the middle class in a small town. Why not force it at least to repose on real merit, on merit useful or agreeable to society?

Demi-fools, carried away by the revolution that is changing everything in France, began twenty years ago to allow that women are capable of something. But they must give themselves up to occupations becoming their sex: educate flowers, make friendships with birds, and pick up plants. These are called innocent amusements.

These innocent pleasures are better than idleness. Well! let's leave them to stupid women; just as we leave to stupid men the glory of composing verses for the birthday of the master of the house. But do men in good faith really mean to suggest to Madame Roland or to Mistress Hutchinson that they should spend their time in tending a little Bengal rose-bush?

All such reasoning can be reduced to this: a man likes to be able to say of his slave: "She's too big a fool to be a knave."

But owing to a certain law called sympathy — a law of nature which, in truth, vulgar eyes never perceive — the defects in the companion of your life are not destructive of your happiness by reason only of the direct ill they can occasion you. I would almost prefer that my wife should, in a moment of anger, attempt to stab me once a year, than that she should welcome me every evening with bad spirits.

Finally, happiness is contagious among people who live together.

Let your mistress have passed the morning, while you were on parade or at the House of Commons, in painting a rose after a masterpiece of Redouté, or in reading a volume of Shakespeare, her pleasure therein will have been equally innocent. Only, with the ideas that she has got from her rose she will soon bore you on your return, and, indeed, she will crave to go out in the evening among people to seek sensations a little more lively. Suppose, on the contrary, she has read Shakespeare, she is as tired as you are, she has had as much pleasure, and she will be happier to give you her arm for a solitary

walk in the Bois de Vincennes than to appear at the smartest party. The pleasures of the fashionable world are not meant for happy women.

Women have, of course, all ignorant men for enemies to their instruction. To-day they spend their time with them, they make love to them and are well received by them; what would become of them if women began to get tired of Boston? When we return from America or the West Indies with a tanned skin and manners that for six months remain somewhat coarse, how would these fellows answer our stories, if they had not this phrase: “As for us, the women are on our side. While you were at New York the colour of tilburies has changed; it’s grey-black that’s fashionable at present.” And we listen attentively, for such knowledge is useful. Such and such a pretty woman will not look at us if our carriage is in bad taste.

These same fools, who think themselves obliged, in virtue of the pre-eminence of their sex, to have more knowledge than women, would be ruined past all hope, if women had the audacity to learn something. A fool of thirty says to himself, as he looks at some little girls of twelve at the country house of one of his friends: “It’s in their company that I shall spend my life ten years from now.” We can imagine his exclamations and his terror, if he saw them studying something useful.

Instead of the society and conversation of effeminate men, an educated woman, if she has acquired ideas without losing the graces of her sex, can always be sure of finding among the most distinguished men of her age a consideration verging on enthusiasm.

“Women would become the rivals instead of the companions of man.” Yes, as soon as you have suppressed love by edict. While we are waiting for this fine law, love will redouble its charms and its ecstasy. These are the plain facts: the basis on which crystallisation rests will be widened; man will be able to take pleasure in all his ideas in company of the woman he loves; nature in all its entirety will in their eyes receive new charms; and as ideas always reflect some of the refinements of character, they will understand each other better and will be guilty of fewer imprudent acts — love will be less blind and will produce less unhappiness.

The desire of pleasing secures all that delicacy and reserve which are of such inestimable value to women from the influence of any scheme of education. 'Tis as though you feared teaching the nightingales not to sing in the spring-time.

The graces of women do not depend on their ignorance; look at the worthy spouses of our village bourgeois, look at the wives of the opulent merchants in England. Affectation is a kind of pedantry; for I call pedantry the affectation of letting myself talk out of season of a dress by Leroy or a novel by Romagnesi, just as much as the affectation of quoting Fra Paolo (46) and the Council of Trent à propos of a discussion on our own mild missionaries. It is the pedantry of dress and good form, it is the necessity of saying exactly the conventional phrase about Rossini, which kills the graces of Parisian women. Nevertheless, in spite of the terrible effects of this contagious malady, is it not in Paris that exist the most delightful women in France? Would not the reason be that chance filled their heads with the most just and interesting ideas? Well, it is these very ideas that I expect from books. I shall not, of course, suggest that they read Grotius of Puffendorf, now that we have Tracy's (47) commentary on Montesquieu.

Woman's delicacy depends on the hazardous position in which she finds herself so early placed, on the necessity of spending her life in the midst of cruel and fascinating enemies.

There are, perhaps, fifty thousand females in Great Britain who are exempted by circumstances from all necessary labour: but without work there is no happiness. Passion forces itself to work, and to work of an exceedingly rough kind — work that employs the whole activity of one's being.

A woman with four children and ten thousand francs income works by making stockings or a frock for her daughter. But it cannot be allowed that a woman who has her own carriage is working when she does her embroidery or a piece of tapestry. Apart from some faint glow of vanity, she cannot possibly have any interest in what she is doing. She does not work.

And thus her happiness runs a grave risk.

And what is more, so does the happiness of her lord and master, for a woman whose heart for two months has been enlivened by no other interest than that of her needlework, may be so insolent as to imagine that gallant-love, vanity-love, or, in fine, even physical love, is a very great happiness in comparison with her habitual condition.

“A woman ought not to make people speak about her.” To which I answer once more: “Is any woman specially mentioned as being able to read?”

And what is to prevent women, while awaiting a revolution in their destiny, from hiding a study which forms their habitual occupation and furnishes them every day with an honourable share of happiness. I will reveal a secret to them by the way. When you have given yourself a task — for example, to get a clear idea about the conspiracy of Fiescho (48), at Genoa in 1547 — the most insipid book becomes interesting. The same is true, in love, of meeting someone quite indifferent, who has just seen the person whom you love. This interest is doubled every month, until you give up the conspiracy of Fiescho.

“The true theatre for a woman is the sick-chamber.” But you must be careful to secure that the divine goodness redoubles the frequency of illnesses, in order to give occupation to our women. This is arguing from the exceptional.

Moreover, I maintain that a woman ought to spend three or four hours of leisure every day, just as men of sense spend their hours of leisure.

A young mother, whose little son has the measles, could not, even if she would, find pleasure in reading Volney’s Travels in Syria, any more than her husband, a rich banker, could get pleasure out of meditating on Malthus in the midst of bankruptcy.

There is one, and only one, way for rich women to distinguish themselves from the vulgar: moral superiority. For in this there is a natural distinction of feeling.

“We do not wish a lady to write books” No, but does giving your daughter a singing-master engage you to make her into an opera-singer? If you like, I’ll say that a woman ought only to write, like Madame de Staël (de Launay),

posthumous works to be published after her death. For a woman of less than fifty to publish is to risk her happiness in the most terrible lottery: if she has the good fortune to have a lover, she will begin by losing him.

I know but one exception: it is that of a woman who writes books in order to keep or bring up her family. In that case she ought always to confine herself to their money-value when talking of her own works, and say, for example, to a cavalry major: “Your rank gives you four thousand francs a year, and I, with my two translations from the English, was able last year to devote an extra three thousand five hundred francs to the education of my two boys.”

Otherwise, a woman should publish as Baron d’Holbach or Madame de la Fayette did; their best friends knew nothing of it. To print a book can only be without inconvenience for a courtesan; the vulgar, who can despise her at their will for her condition, will exalt her to the heavens for her talent, and even make a cult of it.

Many men in France, among those who have an income of six thousand francs, find their habitual source of happiness in literature, without thinking of publishing anything; to read a good book is for them one of the greatest pleasures. At the end of ten years they find that their mind is enlarged twofold, and no one will deny that, in general, the larger the mind the fewer will be its passions incompatible with the happiness of others. I don’t suppose anyone will still deny that the sons of a woman who reads Gibbon and Schiller will have more genius than the children of one who tells her beads and reads Madame de Genlis.

A young barrister, a merchant, an engineer can be launched on life without any education; they pick it up themselves every day by practising their profession. But what resources have their wives for acquiring estimable or necessary qualities? Hidden in the solitude of their household, for them the great book of life necessarily remains shut. They spend always in the same way, after discussing the accounts with their cook, the three louis they get every Monday from their husbands.

I say this in the interest of the tyrant: the least of men, if he is twenty and has nice rosy cheeks, is a danger to a woman with no knowledge, because she is

wholly a creature of instinct. In the eyes of a woman of intellect he will produce as much effect as a handsome lackey.

The amusing thing in present-day education is that you teach young girls nothing that they won't have to forget as soon as they are married. It needs four hours a day, for six years, to learn to play the harp well; to paint well in miniature or water-colours needs half that time. Most young girls do not attain even to a tolerable mediocrity — hence the very true saying: "Amateur means smatterer."

And even supposing a young girl has some talent; three years after she is married she won't take up her harp or her brushes once a month. These objects of so much study now only bore her — unless chance has given her the soul of an artist, and this is always a rarity and scarcely helpful in the management of a household.

And thus under the vain pretext of decency you teach young girls nothing that can give them guidance in the circumstances they will encounter in their lives. You do more — you hide and deny these circumstances in order to add to their strength, through the effect (i) of surprise, and (ii) of mistrust; for education, once found deceitful, must bring mistrust on education as a whole. I maintain that one ought to talk of love to girls who have been well brought up. Who will dare suggest in good faith that, in the actual state of our manners, girls of sixteen do not know of the existence of love? From whom do they get this idea so important and so difficult to give properly? Think of Julie d'Etanges deploring the knowledge that she owes to la Chaillot, one of the maidservants. One must thank Rousseau for having dared be a true painter in an age of false decency.

The present-day education of women being perhaps the most delightful absurdity in modern Europe, strictly speaking the less education they have, the better they are. It is for this reason perhaps that in Italy and Spain they are so superior to the men, and I will even say so superior to the women of other countries.

CHAPTER LVI (43)

OBJECTIONS TO THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN (continued)

IN France all our ideas about women are got from a twopence-half penny catechism. The delightful part of it is that many people, who would not allow the authority of this book to regulate a matter of fifty francs, foolishly follow it word for word in that which bears most nearly on their happiness. Such is the vanity of nineteenth-century ways!

There must be no divorce because marriage is a mystery — and what mystery? The emblem of the union of Jesus Christ with the Church. And what had become of this mystery, if the Church had been given a name of the masculine gender? But let us pass over prejudices already giving way, and let us merely observe this singu-

lar spectacle: the root of the tree sapped by the axe of ridicule, but the branches continuing to flower.

Now to return to the observation of facts and their consequences.

In both sexes it is on the manner in which youth has been employed that depends the fate of extreme old age — this is true for women earlier than for men. How is a woman of forty-five received in society? Severely, or more often in a way that is below her dignity. Women are flattered at twenty and abandoned at forty.

A woman of forty-five is of importance only by reason of her children or her lover.

A mother who excels in the fine arts can communicate her talent to her son only in the extremely rare case, where he has received from nature precisely the soul for this talent. But a mother of intellect and culture will give her young son a grasp not only of all merely agreeable talents, but also of all

talents that are useful to man in society; and he will be able to make his own choice. The barbarism of the Turks depends in great part on the state of moral degradation among the beautiful Georgians. Two young men born at Paris owe to their mothers the incontestable superiority that they show at sixteen over the young provincials of their age. It is from sixteen to twenty-five that the luck turns.

The men who invented gunpowder, printing, the art of weaving, contribute every day to our happiness, and the same is true of the Montesquieus, the Racines and the La Fontaines. Now the number of geniuses produced by a nation is in proportion to the number of men receiving sufficient culture, and there is nothing to prove to me that my bootmaker has not the soul to write like my priest is the intimate ally of my bishop? Without a Luther, there will be no more Catholicism in France in 1850. That religion could only be saved in 1820 by M. Grégoire (49): see how he is treated.

Corneille. He wants the education necessary to develop his feelings and teach him to communicate them to the public.

Owing to the present system of girls' education, all geniuses who are born women are lost to the public good. So soon as chance gives them the means of displaying themselves, you see them attain to talents the most difficult to acquire. In our own days you see a Catherine II, who had no other education but danger and...; a Madame Roland; an Alessandra Mari, who raised a regiment in Arezzo and sent it against the French; a Caroline, Queen of Naples, who knew how to put a stop to the contagion of liberalism better than all our Castlereaghs and our Pitts. As for what stands in the way of women's superiority in works of art, see the chapter on Modesty, article 9. What might Miss Edgeworth not have done, if the circumspection necessary to a young English girl had not forced her at the outset of her career to carry the pulpit into her novel?

What man is there, in love or in marriage, who has the good fortune to be able to communicate his thoughts, just as they occur to him, to the woman with whom he passes his life? He may find a good heart that will share his sorrows, but he is always obliged to turn his thoughts into small change if he

wishes to be understood, and it would be ridiculous to expect reasonable counsel from an intellect that has need of such a method in order to seize the facts. The most perfect woman, according to the ideas of present-day education, leaves her partner isolated amid the dangers of life and soon runs the risk of wearying him.

What an excellent counsellor would a man not find in a wife, if only she could think — a counsellor, after all, whose interests, apart from one single object, and one which does not last beyond the morning of life, are exactly identical with his own!

One of the finest prerogatives of the mind is that it provides old age with consideration. See how the arrival of Voltaire in Paris makes the Royal majesty pale. But poor women! so soon as they have no longer the brilliance of youth, their one sad happiness is to be able to delude themselves on the part they take in society.

The ruins of youthful talents become merely ridiculous, and it were a happiness for our women, such as they actually are, to die at fifty. As for a higher morality — the clearer the mind, the surer the conviction that justice is the only road to happiness. Genius is a power; but still more is it a torch, to light the way to the great art of being happy.

Most men have a moment in their life when they are capable of great things — that moment when nothing seems impossible to them. The ignorance of women causes this magnificent chance to be lost to the human race. Love, nowadays, at the very most will make a man a good horseman or teach him to choose his tailor.

I have no time to defend myself against the advances of criticism. If my word could set up systems, I should give girls, as far as possible, exactly the same education as boys. As I have no intention of writing a book about everything and nothing, I shall be excused from explaining in what regards the present education of men is absurd. But taking it such as it is (they are not taught the two premier sciences, logic and ethics), it is better, I say, to give this education to girls than merely to teach them to play the piano, to paint in water-colours and to do needlework.

Teach girls, therefore, reading, writing and arithmetic by the monitorial (44) system in the central convent schools, in which the presence of any man, except the masters, should be severely punished. The great advantage of bringing children together is that, however narrow the masters may be, in spite of them the children learn from their little comrades the art of living in the world and of managing conflicting interests. A sensible master would explain their little quarrels and friendships to the children, and begin his course of ethics in this way rather than with the story of the Golden Calf.

No doubt some years hence the monitorial system will be applied to everything that is learnt; but, taking things as they actually are, I would have girls learn Latin like boys. Latin is a good subject because it accustoms one to be bored; with Latin should go history, mathematics, a knowledge of the plants useful as nourishment or medicine; then logic and the moral sciences, etc. Dancing, music and drawing ought to begin at five.

At sixteen a girl ought to think about finding a husband, and get from her mother right ideas on love, marriage, and the want of honesty that exists among men.

CHAPTER LVI (Part II)

ON MARRIAGE

THE fidelity of married women, where love is absent, is probably something contrary to nature.

Men have attempted to obtain this unnatural result by the fear of hell and sentiments of religion; the example of Spain and Italy shows how far they have succeeded.

In France they have attempted to obtain it by public opinion — the one dyke capable of resistance, yet it has been badly built. It is absurd to tell a young girl: "You must be faithful to the husband of your choice," and then to marry her by force to a boring old dotard.

"But girls are pleased to get married." Because, under the narrow system of present-day education, the slavery that they undergo in their mother's house is intolerably tedious; further, they lack enlightenment; and, lastly, there are the demands of nature. There is but one way to obtain more fidelity among married women: it is to give freedom to girls and divorce to married people.

A woman always loses the fairest days of her youth in her first marriage, and by divorce she gives fools the chance of talking against her.

Young women who have plenty of lovers have nothing to get from divorce, and women of a certain age, who have already had them, hope to repair their reputation — in France they always succeed in doing so — by showing themselves extremely severe against the errors which have left them behind. It is generally some wretched young woman, virtuous and desperately in

love, who seeks a divorce, and gets her good name blackened at the hands of women who have had fifty different men.

CHAPTER LVII

OF VIRTUE, SO CALLED

MYSELF, I honour with the name of virtue the habit of doing painful actions which are of use to others.

St. Simon Stylites, who sits twenty-two years on the top of a column beating himself with a strap, is in my eyes, I confess, not at all virtuous; and it is this that gives this essay a tone only too unprincipled.

I esteem not a bit more the Chartreux monk who eats nothing but fish and allows himself to talk only on Thursday. I own I prefer General Carnot, who, at an advanced age, puts up with the rigours of exile in a little northern town rather than do a base action.

I have some hope that this extremely vulgar declaration will lead the reader to skip the rest of this chapter.

This morning, a holiday, at Pesaro (May 7th, 1819), being obliged to go to Mass, I got hold of a Missal and fell upon these words: —

Joanna, Alphonsi quinti Lusitaniae regis filia, tanta divini amoris flamma praeventa fuit, ut ab ipsa pueritia rerum caducarum pertaesa, solo coelestis patriae desiderio flagraret.

The virtue so touchingly preached by the very beautiful words of the Génie du Christianisme (50) is thus reduced to not eating truffles for fear of a stomach-ache. It is quite a reasonable calculation, if you believe in hell; but it is a self-interested calculation, the most personal and prosaic possible. That philosophic virtue, which so well explains the return of Regulus to Carthage, and which was responsible for some similar incidents in our

own Revolution, proves, on the contrary, generosity of soul.

It is merely in order not to be burned in the next world, in a great caldron of boiling oil, that Madame de Tourvel resists Valmont. I cannot imagine how the idea, with all its ignominy, of being the rival of a caldron of boiling oil does not drive Valmont away.

How much more touching is Julie d'Étanges, respecting her vows and the happiness of M. de Wolmar.

What I say of Madame de Tourvel, I find applicable to the lofty virtue of Mistress Hutchinson. What a soul did Puritanism steal away from love!

One of the oddest peculiarities of this world is that men always think they know whatever it is clearly necessary for them to know. Hear them talk about politics, that very complicated science; hear them talk of marriage and morals.

CHAPTER LVIII

STATE OF EUROPE WITH REGARD TO MARRIAGE

SO far we have only treated the question of marriage according to theory we are now to treat it according to the facts.

Which of all countries is that in which there are the most happy marriages? Without dispute, Protestant Germany (52).

I extract the following fragment from the diary of Captain Salviati, without changing a single word in it: —

“Halberstadt, June 23rd, 1807.... Nevertheless, M. de Bülow is absolutely and openly in love with Mademoiselle de Feltheim; he follows her about everywhere, always, talks to her unceasingly, and very often keeps her yards away from us. Such open marks of affection shock society, break it up — and on the banks of the Seine would pass for the height of indecency. The Germans think much less than we do about what breaks up society; indecency is little more than a conventional evil. For five years M. de Bülow has been paying court in this way to Mina, whom he has been unable to marry owing to the war. All the young ladies in society have their lover, and he is known to everyone. Among all the German acquaintances of my friend M. de Mermann (53) there is not a single one who has not married for love.

“Mermann, his brother George, M. de Voigt, M. de

Lazing, etc. He has just given me the names of a dozen of them.

“The open and passionate way in which these lovers pay their court to their mistresses would be the height of indecency, absurdity and shame in France.

“Mermann told me this evening, as we were returning from the Chasseur Vert, that, among all the women of his very numerous family, he did not

suppose there was a single one who had deceived her husband. Allowing that he is wrong about half of them, it is still a singular country.

“His shady proposal to his sister-in-law, Madame de Munichow, whose family is about to die out for want of male heirs and its very considerable possessions revert to the crown, coldly received, but merely with: ‘Let’s hear no more of that.’

“He tells the divine Philippine (who has just obtained a divorce from her husband, who only wanted to sell her to his Sovereign) something about it in very covert terms. Unfeigned indignation, toned down in its expression instead of being exaggerated: ‘Have you, then, no longer any respect for our sex? I prefer to think, for the sake of your honour, that you’re joking.’

“During a journey to the Brocken with this really beautiful woman, she reclined on his shoulder while asleep or pretending to sleep; a jolt threw her somewhat on to the top of him, and he put his arm round her waist; she threw herself into the other corner of the carriage. He doesn’t think that she is incorruptible, but he believes that she would kill herself the day after her mistake. What is certain is that he loved her passionately and that he was similarly loved by her, that they saw each other continually and that she is without reproach. But the sun is very pale at Halberstadt, the Government very meddling, and these two persons very cold. In their most passionate interviews Kant and Klopstock were always of the party.

“Mermann told me that a married man, convicted of adultery, could be condemned by the courts of Brunswick to ten years’ imprisonment; the law has fallen into disuse, but at least ensures that people do not joke about this sort of affair. The distinction of being a man with a past is very far from being such an advantage here as it is in France, where you can scarcely refuse it a married man in his presence without insulting him.

“Anyone who told my Colonel or Ch... that they no longer have women since their marriage would get a very poor reception.

“Some years ago a woman of this country, in a fit of religious fervour, told her husband, a gentleman of the Court of Brunswick, that she had deceived him for six years together. The husband, as big a fool as his wife, went to tell

the news to the Duke; the gallant was obliged to resign all his employments and to leave the country in twenty-four hours, under a threat from the Duke to put the laws in motion."

"HALBERSTADT, July jth, 1807.

"Husbands are not deceived here, 'tis true — but ye gods, what women! Statues, masses scarcely organic! Before marriage they are exceedingly attractive, graceful as gazelles, with quick tender eyes that always understand the least hint of love. The reason is that they are on the look out for a husband. So soon as the husband is found, they become absolutely nothing but getters of children, in a state of perpetual adoration before the begetter. In a family of four or five children there must always be one of them ill, since half the children die before seven, and in this country, immediately one of the babies is ill, the mother goes out no more. I can see that they find an indescribable pleasure in being caressed by their children. Little by little they lose all their ideas. It is the same at Philadelphia. There girls of the wildest and most innocent gaiety become, in less than a year, the most boring of women. To have done with the marriages of Protestant Germany — a wife's dowry is almost nil because of the fiefs. Mademoiselle de Diesdorff, daughter of a man with an income of forty thousand francs, will have a dowry of perhaps two thousand crowns (seven thousand five hundred francs).

"M. de Mermann got four thousand crowns with his wife.

"The rest of the dowry is payable in vanity at the Court. 'One could find among the middle class,' Mermann told me, 'matches with a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand crowns (six hundred thousand francs instead of fifteen). But one could no longer be presented at Court; one would be barred all society in which a prince or princess appeared: it's terrible.' These were his words, and they came from the heart.

"A German woman with the soul of Phi..., her intellect, her noble and sensitive face, the fire she must have had at eighteen (she is now twenty-seven), a woman such as this country produces, with her virtue, naturalness

and no more than a useful little dose of religion — such a woman would no doubt make her husband very happy. But how flatter oneself that one would remain true to such insipid matrons?

"'But he was married,' she answered me this morning when I blamed the four years' silence of Corinne's lover, Lord Oswald. She sat up till three o'clock to read Corinne. The novel gave her profound emotion, and now she answers me with touching candour: 'But he was married.'

"Phi... is so natural, with so naïve a sensibility, that even in this land of the natural, she seems a prude to the petty heads that govern petty hearts; their witticisms make her sick, and she in no way hides it.

"When she is in good company, she laughs like mad at the most lively jokes. It was she who told me the story of the young princess of sixteen, later on so well known, who often managed to make the officer on guard at her door come up into her rooms."

SWITZERLAND

I know few families happier than those of the Oberland, the part of Switzerland that lies round Berne; and it is a fact of public notoriety (1816) that the girls there spend Saturday to Sunday nights with their lovers.

The fools who know the world, after a voyage from Paris to Saint Cloud, will cry out; happily I find in a Swiss writer confirmation of what I myself saw during four months.

"An honest peasant complained of certain losses he had sustained in his orchard; I asked him why he didn't keep a dog: 'My daughters would never get married.' I did not understand his answer; he told me he had had such a bad-tempered dog that none of the young men dared climb up to the windows any longer.

"Another peasant, mayor of his village, told me in praise of his wife, that when she was a girl no one had had more Kilter or Wàchterer — that is, had had more young men come to spend the night with her.

“A Colonel, widely esteemed, was forced, while crossing the mountains, to spend the night at the bottom of one of the most lonely and picturesque valleys in the country. He lodged with the first magistrate in the valley, a man rich and of good repute. On entering, the stranger noticed a young girl of sixteen, a model of gracefulness, freshness and simplicity: she was the daughter of the master of the house. That night there was a village ball; the stranger paid court to the girl, who was really strikingly beautiful. At last, screwing up courage, he ventured to ask her whether he couldn’t ‘keep watch’ with her. ‘No,’ answered the girl, ‘I share a room with my cousin, but I’ll come myself to yours.’ You can judge of the confusion this answer gave him. They had supper; the stranger got up, the girl took a torch and followed him into his room; he imagined the moment was at hand. ‘Oh no,’ she said simply, ‘I must first ask Mamma’s permission.’ He would have been less staggered by a thunderbolt! She went out; his courage revived; he slipped into these good folks’ parlour, and listened to the girl begging her mother in a caressing tone to grant her the desired permission; in the end she got it. ‘Eh, old man,’ said the mother to her husband who was already in bed, d’you allow Trineli to spend the night with the Colonel?’ With all my heart,’ answers the father, ‘I think I’d lend even my wife to such a man.’

‘Right then, go,’ says the mother to Trineli; ‘but be a good girl, and don’t take off your petticoat...’ At daybreak, Trineli, respected by the stranger, rose still virgin. She arranged the bedclothes, prepared coffee and cream for her partner and, after she had breakfasted with him, seated on his bed, cut off a little piece of her broustpletz (a piece of velvet going over the breast). ‘Here,’ she said, ‘keep this souvenir of a happy night; I shall never forget it. — Why are you a Colonel?’ And giving him a last kiss, she ran away; he didn’t manage to see her again. Here you have the absolute opposite of French morals, and I am far from approving them.”

Were I a legislator, I would have people adopt in France, as in Germany, the custom of evening dances. Three times a week girls would go with their mothers to a ball, beginning at seven and ending at midnight, and demanding no other outlay but a violin and a few glasses of water. In a neighbouring room the mothers, maybe a little jealous of their daughters’ happy education, would play boston; in a third, the fathers would find papers and could talk politics. Between midnight and one o’clock all the families would collect together and return to the paternal roof. Girls would get to know young men;

they would soon come to loathe fatuity and the indiscretions it is responsible for — in fact they would choose themselves husbands. Some girls would have unhappy love-affairs, but the number of deceived husbands and unhappy matches would diminish to an immense degree. It would then be less absurd to attempt to punish infidelity with dishonour. The law could say to young women: "You have chosen your husband — be faithful to him." In those circumstances I would allow the indictment and punishment by the courts of what the English call criminal conversation. The courts could impose, to the profit of prisons and hospitals, a fine equal to two-thirds of the seducer's fortune and imprisonment for several years.

A woman could be indicted for adultery before a jury. The jury should first declare that the husband's conduct had been irreproachable.

A woman, if convicted, could be condemned to imprisonment for life. If the husband had been absent more than two years, the woman could not be condemned to more than some years' imprisonment. Public morals would soon model themselves on these laws and would perfect them.

And then the nobles and the priests, still regretting bitterly the proper times of Madame de Montespan or Madame du Barry, would be forced to allow divorce.

There would be in a village within sight of Paris an asylum for unfortunate women, a house of refuge into which, under pain of the galleys, no man besides the doctor and the almoner should enter. A woman who wished to get a divorce would be bound, first of all, to go and place herself as prisoner in this asylum; there she would spend two years without going out once. She could write, but never receive an answer.

A council composed of peers of France and certain magistrates of repute would direct, in the woman's name, the proceedings for a divorce and would regulate the pension to be paid to the institution by the husband. A woman who failed in her plea before the courts would be allowed to spend the rest of her life in the asylum. The Government would compensate the administration of the asylum with a sum of two thousand francs for each woman who sought its refuge. To be received in the asylum, a woman must

have had a dowry of over twenty thousand francs. The moral régime would be one of extreme severity.

After two years of complete seclusion from the world, a divorced woman could marry again.

Once arrived at this point, Parliament could consider whether, in order to infuse in girls a spirit of emulation, it would not be advisable to allow the sons a share of the paternal heritage double that of their sisters. The daughters who did not find husbands would have a share equal to that of the male children. It may be remarked, by the way, that this system would, little by little, destroy the only too inconvenient custom of marriages of convenience. The possibility of divorce would render useless such outrageous meanness.

At various points in France, and in certain poor villages, thirty abbeys for old maids should be established. The Government should endeavour to surround these establishments with consideration, in order to console a little the sorrows of the poor women who were to end their lives there. They should be given all the toys of dignity.

But enough of such chimeras!

CHAPTER LIX

WERTHER AND DON JUAN

AMONG young people, when they have done with mocking at some poor lover, and he has left the room, the conversation generally ends by discussing the question, whether it is better to deal with women like Mozart's Don Juan or like Werther. The contrast would be more exact, if I had said Saint-Preux, but he is so dull a personage, that in making him their representative, I should be wronging feeling hearts.

Don Juan's character requires the greater number of useful and generally esteemed virtues — admirable daring, resourcefulness, vivacity, a cool head, a witty mind, etc.

The Don Juans have great moments of bitterness and a very miserable old age — but then most men do not reach old age.

The lover plays a poor rôle in the drawing-room in the evening, because to be a success and a power among women a man must show just as much keenness on winning them as on a game of billiards. As everybody knows that the lover has a great interest in life, he exposes himself, for all his cleverness, to mockery. Only, next morning he wakes, not to be in a bad temper until something piquant or something nasty turns up to revive him, but to dream of her he loves and build castles in the air for love to dwell in.

Love à la Werther opens the soul to all the arts, to all sweet and romantic impressions, to the moonlight, to the beauty of the forest, to the beauty of pictures — in a word, to the feeling and enjoyment of the beautiful,

under whatever form it be found, even under the coarsest cloak. It causes man to find happiness even without riches.

Such souls, instead of growing weary like Mielhan, Bezenval, etc., go mad, like Rousseau, from an excess of sensibility. Women endowed with a certain elevation of soul, who, after their first youth, know how to recognise love, both where it is and what it is, generally escape the Don Juan — he is remarkable in their eyes rather by the number than the quality of his conquests. Observe, to the prejudice of tender hearts, that publicity is as necessary to Don Juan's triumph as secrecy is to Werther's. Most of the men who make women the business of their life are born in the lap of luxury; that is to say, they are, as a result of their education and the example set by everything that surrounded them in youth, hardened egoists.

The real Don Juan even ends by looking on women as the enemy, and rejoicing in their misfortunes of every sort.

On the other hand, the charming Duke delle Pignatelle showed us the proper way to find happiness in pleasures, even without passion. "I know that I like a woman," he told me one evening, "when I find myself completely confused in her company, and don't know what to say to her." So far from letting his self-esteem be put to shame or take its revenge for these embarrassing moments, he cultivated them lovingly as the source of his happiness. With this charming young man gallant-love was quite free from the corroding influence of vanity; his was a shade of true love, pale, but innocent and unmixed; and he respected all women, as charming beings, towards whom we are far from just. (February 20, 1820.)

As a man does not choose himself a temperament, that is to say, a soul, he cannot play a part above him. J. J. Rousseau and the Duc de Richelieu might have tried in vain; for all their cleverness, they could never have exchanged their fortunes with respect to women. I could well believe that the Duke never had moments such as those that Rousseau experienced in the park de la Chevrette with Madame d'Houdetot; at Venice, when listening to the music of the Scuole; and at Turin at the feet of Madame Bazile. But then he never had to blush at the ridicule that overwhelmed Rousseau in his affair with Madame de Larnage, remorse for which pursued him during the rest of his life.

A Saint-Preux's part is sweeter and fills up every moment of existence, but it must be owned that that of a Don Juan is far more brilliant. Saint-Preux's

tastes may change at middle age: solitary and retired, and of pensive habits, he takes a back place on the stage of life, while Don Juan realises the magnificence of his reputation among men, and could yet perhaps please a woman of feeling by making sincerely the sacrifice of his libertine's tastes.

After all the reasons offered so far, on both sides of the question, the balance still seems to be even. What makes me think that the Werthers are the happier, is that Don Juan reduces love to the level of an ordinary affair. Instead of being able, like Werther, to shape realities to his desires, he finds, in love, desires which are imperfectly satisfied by cold reality, just as in ambition, avarice or other passions. Instead of losing himself in the enchanting reveries of crystallisation, he thinks, like a general, of the success of his manœuvres and, in a word, he kills love, instead of enjoying it more keenly than other men, as ordinary people imagine.

This seems to me unanswerable. And there is another reason, which is no less so in my eyes, though, thanks to the malignity of Providence, we must pardon men for not recognising it. The habit of justice is, to my thinking, apart from accidents, the most assured way of arriving at happiness — and a Werther is no villain.

To be happy in crime, it is absolutely necessary to have no remorse. I do not know whether such a creature can exist; I have never seen him. I would bet that the affair of Madame Michelin disturbed the Duc de Richelieu's nights.

One ought either to have absolutely no sympathy or be able to put the human race to death — which is impossible.

People who only know love from novels will experience a natural repugnance in reading these words in favour of virtue in love. The reason is that, by the laws of the novel, the portraiture of a virtuous love is essentially tiresome and uninteresting. Thus the sentiment of virtue seems from a distance to neutralise that of love, and the words "a virtuous love" seem synonymous with a feeble love. But all this comes from weakness in the as of painting, and has nothing to do with passion such as it exists in nature.

I beg to be allowed to draw a picture of my most intimate friend.

Don Juan renounces all the duties which bind him to the rest of men. In the great market of life he is a dishonest merchant, who is always buying and never paying. The idea of equality inspires the same rage in him as water in a man with hydrophobia; it is for this reason that pride of birth goes so well with the character of Don Juan. With the idea of the equality of rights disappears that of justice, or, rather, if Don Juan is sprung from an illustrious family, such common ideas have never come to him. I could easily believe that a man with an historic name is sooner disposed than another to set fire to the town in order to get his egg cooked. We must excuse him; he is so possessed with self-love that he comes to the point of losing all idea of the evil he causes, and of seeing no longer anything in the universe capable of joy or sorrow except himself. In the fire of youth, when passion fills our own hearts with the pulse of life and keeps us from mistrust of others, Don Juan, all senses and apparent happiness, applauds himself for thinking only of himself, while he sees other men pay their sacrifices to duty. He imagines that he has found out the great art of living. But, in the midst of his triumph, while still scarcely thirty years of age, he perceives to his astonishment that life is wanting, and feels a growing disgust for what were all his pleasures. Don Juan told me at Thorn, in an access of melancholy: “There are not twenty different sorts of women, and once you have had two or three of each sort, satiety sets in.” I answered: “It is only imagination that can for ever escape satiety. Each woman inspires a different interest, and, what is more, if chance throws the same woman in your way two or three years earlier or later in the course of life, and if chance means you to love, you can love the same woman in different manners. But a woman of gentle heart, even when she loved you, would produce in you, because of her pretensions to equality, only irritation to your pride. Your way of having women kills all the other pleasures of life; Werther’s increases them a hundredfold.”

This sad tragedy reaches the last act. You see Don Juan in old age, turning on this and that, never on himself, as the cause of his own satiety. You see him, tormented by a consuming poison, flying from this to that in a continual change of purpose. But, however brilliant the appearances may be, in the end he only changes one misery for another. He tries the boredom of inaction, he tries the boredom of excitement — there is nothing else for him to choose.

At last he discovers the fatal truth and confesses it to himself; henceforward he is reduced for all his enjoyment to making display of his power, and

openly doing evil for evil's sake. In short, 'tis the last degree of settled gloom; no poet has dared give us a faithful picture of it — the picture, if true, would strike horror. But one may hope that a man, above the ordinary, will retrace his steps along this fatal path; for at the bottom of Don Juan's character there is a contradiction. I have supposed him a man of great intellect, and great intellect leads us to the discovery of virtue by the road that runs to the temple of glory.

La Rochefoucauld, who, however, was a master of self-love, and who in real life was nothing but a silly man of letters, says (267): "The pleasure of love consists in loving, and a man gets more happiness from the passion he feels than from the passion he inspires."

Don Juan's happiness consists in vanity, based, it is true, on circumstances brought about by great intelligence and activity; but he must feel that the most inconsiderable general who wins a battle, the most inconsiderable prefect who keeps his department in order, realises a more signal enjoyment than his own. The Due de Nemours' happiness when Madame de Clèves tells him that she loves him, is, I imagine, above Napoleon's happiness at Marengo.

Love à la Don Juan is a sentiment of the same kind as a taste for hunting. It is a desire for activity which must be kept alive by divers objects and by putting a man's talents continually to the test.

Love à la Werther is like the feeling of a schoolboy writing a tragedy — and a thousand times better; it is a new goal, to which everything in life is referred and which changes the face of everything. Passion-love casts all nature in its sublimer aspects before the eyes of a man, as a novelty invented but yesterday. He is amazed that he has never seen the singular spectacle that is now discovered to his soul. Everything is new, everything is alive, everything breathes the most passionate interest. A lover sees the woman he loves on the horizon of every landscape he comes across, and, while he travels a hundred miles to go and catch a glimpse of her for an instant, each tree, each rock speaks to him of her in a different manner and tells him something new about her. Instead of the tumult of this magic spectacle, Don Juan finds that external objects have for him no value apart from their degree of utility, and must be made amusing by some new intrigue.

Love à la Werther has strange pleasures; after a year or two, the lover has now, so to speak, but one heart with her he loves; and this, strange to say, even independent of his success in love — even under a cruel mistress. Whatever he does, whatever he sees, he asks himself: “What would she say if she were with me? What would I say to her about this view of Casa-Lecchio?” He speaks to her, he hears her answer, he smiles at her fun. A hundred miles from her, and under the weight of her anger, he surprises himself, reflecting: “Léonore was very gay that night.” Then he wakes up: “Good God!” he says to himself with a sigh, “there are madmen in Bedlam less mad than I.”

“You make me quite impatient,” said a friend of mine, to whom I read out this remark: “you are continually opposing the passionate man to the Don Juan, and that is not the point in dispute. You would be right, if a man could provide himself with passion at will. But what about indifference — what is to be done then?” — Gallant-love without horrors. Its horrors always come from a little soul, that needs to be reassured as to its own merit.

To continue. — The Don Juans must find great difficulty in agreeing with what I was saying just now of this state of the soul. Besides the fact that they can neither see nor feel this state, it gives too great a blow to their vanity. The error of their life is expecting to win in a fortnight what a timid lover can scarcely obtain in six months. They base their reckoning on experience got at the expense of those poor devils, who have neither the soul to please a woman of feeling by revealing its ingenuous workings, nor the necessary wit for the part of a Don Juan. They refuse to see that the same prize, though granted by the same woman, is not the same thing.

L’homme prudent sans cesse se méfie.

C’est pour cela que des amants trompeurs

Le nombre est grand. Les dames que l’on prie

Font soupirer longtemps des serviteurs

Qui n’ont jamais été faux de leur vie.

Mais du trésor qu’elles donnent enfin

Le prix n’est su que du cœur qui le goûte;

Plus on l’achète et plus il est divin:

Le los d’amour ne vaut pas ce qu’il coûte.

(Nivernais, Le Troubadour Guillaume de la Tour,

III, 342.)

Passion-love in the eyes of a Don Juan may be compared to a strange road, steep and toilsome, that begins, ’tis true, amidst delicious copses, but is soon lost among sheer rocks, whose aspect is anything but inviting to the eyes of the vulgar. Little by little the road penetrates into the mountain-heights, in the midst of a dark forest, where the huge trees, intercepting the daylight with their shaggy tops that seem to touch the sky, throw a kind of horror into souls untempered by dangers.

After wandering with difficulty, as in an endless maze, whose multiple turnings try the patience of our self-love, on a sudden we turn a corner and find ourselves in a new world, in the delicious valley of Cashmire of Lalla Rookh. How can the Don Juans, who never venture along this road, or at most take but a few steps along it, judge of the views that it offers at the end of the journey?...

* * * * *

So you see inconstancy is good:

“Il me faut du nouveau, n’en fût-il plus au monde.”

Very well, I reply, you make light of oaths and justice, and what can you look for in inconstancy? Pleasure apparently.

But the pleasure to be got from a pretty woman, desired a fortnight and loved three months, is different from the pleasure to be found in a mistress, desired three years and loved ten.

If I do not insert the word “always” the reason is that I have been told old age, by altering our organs, renders us incapable of loving; myself, I don’t believe it. When your mistress has become your intimate friend, she can give you new pleasures, the pleasures of old age. ’Tis a flower that, after it has been a rose in the morning — the season of flowers — becomes a delicious fruit in the evening, when the roses are no longer in season.

A mistress desired three years is really a mistress in every sense of the word; you cannot approach her without trembling; and let me tell the Don Juans that a man who trembles is not bored. The pleasures of love are always in proportion to our fear.

The evil of inconstancy is weariness; the evil of passion is despair and death. The cases of despair are noted and become legend. No one pays attention to the weary old libertines dying of boredom, with whom the streets of Paris are lined.

“Love blows out more brains than boredom.” I have no doubt of it: boredom robs a man of everything, even the courage to kill himself.

There is a certain type of character which can find pleasure only in variety. A man who cries up Champagne at the expense of Bordeaux is only saying, with more or less eloquence: “I prefer Champagne.”

Each of these wines has its partisans, and they are all right, so long as they quite understand themselves, and run after the kind of happiness best suited to their organs and their habits. What ruins the case for inconstancy is that all fools range themselves on that side from lack of courage.

But after all, everyone, if he will take the trouble to look into himself, has his ideal, and there always seems to me something a little ridiculous in wanting to convert your neighbour.

BOOK III.

SCATTERED FRAGMENTS

UNDER this title, which I would willingly have made still more modest, I have brought together, without excessive severity, a selection made from three or four hundred playing cards, on which I found a few lines scrawled in pencil. That which, I suppose, must be called the original manuscript, for want of a simpler name, was in many places made up of pieces of paper of all sizes, written on in pencil, and joined together by Lisio with sealing-wax, to save him the trouble of copying them afresh. He told me once that nothing he ever noted down seemed to him worth the trouble of recopying an hour later. I have entered so fully into all this in the hope that it may serve as an excuse for repetitions.

FRAGMENTS I-XX

I

Everything can be acquired in solitude, except character.

II

1821. Hatred, love and avarice, the three ruling passions at Rome, and with gambling added, almost the only ones.

At first sight the Romans seem ill-natured, but they are only very much on their guard and blessed with an imagination which flares up at the least suggestion.

If they give a gratuitous proof of ill-nature, it is the case of a man, gnawed by fear, and testing his gun to reassure himself.

III

If I were to say, as I believe, that good-nature is the keynote of the Parisian's character, I should be very frightened of having offended him.—" I won't be good!"

IV

A proof of love comes to light, when all the pleasures and all the pains, which all the other passions and wants of man can produce, in a moment cease working.

V

Prudery is a kind of avarice — the worst of all.

VI

To have a solid character is to have a long and tried experience of life's disillusions and misfortunes. Then it is a question of desiring constantly or not at all.

VII

Love, such as it exists in smart society, is the love of battle, the love of gambling.

VIII

Nothing kills gallant love like gusts of passion-love from the other side. (Contessina L. Forli — 1819).

X

Prosaic is a new word, which once I thought absurd, for nothing could be colder than our poetry. If there has been any warmth in France for the last fifty years, it is assuredly to be found in its prose.

But anyhow, the little Countess L — used the word and I like writing it.

The definition of prosaic is to be got from Don Quixote, and "the complete contrast of Knight and Squire." The Knight tall and pale; the Squire fat and

fresh. The former all heroism and courtesy; the latter all selfishness and servility. The former always full of romantic and touching fancies; the latter a model of worldly wisdom, a compendium of wise saws. The one always feeding his soul on dreams of heroism and daring; the other ruminating some really sensible scheme in which, never fear, he will take into strict account all the shameful, selfish little movements the human heart is prone to.

At the very moment when the former should be brought to his senses by the non-success of yesterday's dreams, he is already busy on his castles in Spain for to-day.

You ought to have a prosaic husband and to choose a romantic lover.

Marlborough had a prosaic soul: Henry IV, in love at fifty-five with a young princess, who could not forget his age, a romantic heart.

There are fewer prosaic beings among the nobility than in the middle-class.

This is the fault of trade, it makes people prosaic.

XI

Nothing so interesting as passion: for there everything is unforeseen, and the principal is the victim. Nothing so flat as gallantry, where everything is a matter of calculation, as in all the prosaic affairs of life.

XII

At the end of a visit you always finish by treating a lover better than you meant to. (L., November 2nd, 1818).

XIII

In spite of genius in an upstart, the influence of rank always makes itself felt. Think of Rousseau losing his heart to all the “ladies” he met, and weeping tears of rapture because the Duke of L — , one of the dullest courtiers of the period, deigns to take the right side rather than the left in a walk with a certain M. Coindet, friend of Rousseau! (L., May 3rd, 1820.)

XIV

Women’s only educator is the world. A mother in love does not hesitate to appear in the seventh heaven of delight, or in the depth of despair, before her daughters aged fourteen or fifteen. Remember that, under these happy skies, plenty of women are quite nice-looking till forty-five, and the majority are married at eighteen.

Think of La Valchiusa saying yesterday of Lampugnani: “Ah, that man was made for me, he could love,.. » etc., etc,” and so on in this strain to a friend — all before her daughter, a little thing of fourteen or fifteen, very much on the alert, and whom she also took with her on the more than friendly walks with the lover in question.

Sometimes girls get hold of sound rules of conduct. For example, take Madame Guarnacci, addressing her two daughters and two men, who have never called on her before. For an hour and a half she treats them to profound maxims, based on examples within their own knowledge (that of La Cercara in Hungary), on the precise point at which it is right to punish with infidelity a lover who misbehaves himself. (Ravenna, January 23rd, 1820.)

XV

The sanguine man, the true Frenchman (Colonel M —) instead of being tormented by excess of feeling, like Rousseau, if he has a rendezvous for the next evening at seven, sees everything, right up to the blessed moment, through rosy spectacles. People of this kind are not in the least susceptible to passion-love; it would upset their sweet tranquillity. I will go so far as to say that perhaps they would find its transports a nuisance, or at all events be humiliated by the timidity it produces.

XVI

Most men of the world, through vanity, caution or disaster, let themselves love a woman freely only after intimate intercourse.

XVI ——

With very gentle souls a woman needs to be easy-going in order to encourage crystallisation.

XVIII

A woman imagines that the voice of the public is speaking through the mouth of the first fool or the first treacherous friend who claims to be its faithful interpreter to her.

XIX

There is a delicious pleasure in clasping in your arms a woman who has wronged you grievously, who has been your bitter enemy for many a day, and is ready to be so again. Good fortune of the French officers in Spain, 1812.

XX

Solitude is what one wants, to relish one's own heart and to love; but to succeed one must go amongst men, here, there and everywhere.

FRAGMENTS XXI-XL

XXI

"All the observations of the French on love are well written, carefully and without exaggeration, but they bear only on light affections," said that delightful person, Cardinal Lante.

XXII

In Goldoni's comedy, the Innamorati, all the workings of passion are excellent; it is the very repulsive meanness of style and thought which revolts one. The contrary is true of a French comedy.

XXIII

The youth of 1822: To say "serious turn of mind, active disposition" means "sacrifice of the present to the future." Nothing develops the soul like the power and the habit of making such sacrifices. I foresee the probability of more great passions in 1832 than in 1772.

XXIV

The choleric temperament, when it does not display itself in too repulsive a form, is one perhaps most apt of all to strike and keep alive the imagination of women. If the choleric temperament does not fall among propitious surroundings, as Lauzun in Saint-Simon (Memoirs), the difficulty is to grow used to it. But once grasped by a woman, this character must fascinate her: yes, even the savage and fanatic Balfour (Old Mortality). For women it is the antithesis of the prosaic.

XXV

In love one often doubts what one believes most strongly (La R., 355)- In every other passion, what once we have proved, we no longer doubt.

XXVI

Verse was invented to assist the memory. Later it was kept to increase the pleasure of reading by the sight of the difficulty overcome. Its survival nowadays in dramatic art is a relic of barbarity. Example: the Cavalry Regulations put into verse by M. de Bonnay.

XXVII

While this jealous slave feeds his soul on boredom, avarice, hatred and other such poisonous, cold passions, I spend a night of happiness dreaming of her — of her who, through mistrust, treats me badly.

XXVIII

It needs a great soul to dare have a simple style. That is why Rousseau put so much rhetoric into the Nouvelle Héloïse — which makes it unreadable for anyone over thirty.

XXIX

“The greatest reproach we could possibly make against ourselves is, certainly, to have let fade, like the shadowy phantoms produced by sleep, the ideas of honour and justice, which from time to time well up in our hearts.”

(Letter from Fena, March, 1819.)

XXX

A respectable woman is in the country and passes an hour in the hot-house with her gardener. Certain people, whose views she has upset, accuse her of having found a lover in this gardener. What answer is there?

Speaking absolutely, the thing is possible. She could say: “My character speaks for me, look at my behaviour throughout life” — only all this is equally invisible to the eyes of the ill-natured who won’t see, and the fools who can’t. (Salviati, Rome, July 23rd, 1819.)

XXXI

I have known a man find out that his rival’s love was returned, and yet the rival himself remain blinded to the fact by his passion.

XXXII

The more desperately he is in love, the more violent the pressure a man is forced to put upon himself, in order to risk annoying the woman he loves by taking her hand.

XXXIII

Ludicrous rhetoric but, unlike that of Rousseau, inspired by true passion. (Memoirs of M. de Mau.. Letter of S — .)

XVII — NATURALNESS

I saw, or I thought I saw, this evening the triumph of naturalness in a young woman, who certainly seems to me to possess a great character. She adores, obviously, I think, one of her cousins and must have confessed to herself the state of her heart. The cousin is in love with her, but as she is very serious with him, thinks she does not like him, and lets himself be fascinated by the marks of preference shown him by Clara, a young widow and friend of Mélanie. I think he will marry her. Mélanie sees it and suffers all that a proud heart, struggling involuntarily with a violent passion, is capable of suffering. She has only to alter her ways a little; but she would look upon it as a piece of meanness, the consequences of which would affect her whole life, to depart one instant from her natural self.

XXXV

Sappho saw in love only sensual intoxication or physical pleasure made sublime by crystallisation. Anacreon looked for sensual and intellectual amusement. There was too little security in Antiquity for people to find leisure for passion-love.

XXXVI

The foregoing fact fully justifies me in rather laughing at people who think Homer superior to Tasso. Passion-love did exist in the time of Homer, and at no great distance from Greece.

XXXVII

Woman with a heart, if you wish to know whether the man you adore loves you with passion-love, study your lover's early youth. Every man of distinction in the early days of his life is either a ridiculous enthusiast or an unfortunate. A man easy to please, of gay and cheerful humour, can never love with the passion your heart requires.

Passion I call only that which has gone through long misfortunes, misfortunes which novels take good care not to depict — what's more they can't!

XXXVIII

A bold resolution can change in an instant the most extreme misfortune into quite a tolerable state of things. The evening of a defeat, a man is retreating in hot haste, his charger already spent. He can hear distinctly the troop of cavalry galloping in pursuit. Suddenly he stops, dismounts, recharges his carbine and pistols, and makes up his mind to defend himself. Straightway, instead of having death, he has a cross of the Legion of Honour before his eyes.

XXXIX

Basis of English habits. About 1730, while we already had Voltaire and Fontenelle, a machine was invented in England to separate the grain, after threshing, from the chaff. It worked by means of a wheel, which gave the air enough movement to blow away the bits of chafl. But in that biblical country the peasants pretended that it was wicked to go against the will of Divine Providence, and to produce an artificial wind like this, instead of begging Heaven with an ardent prayer for enough wind to thresh the corn and waiting for the moment appointed by the God of Israel. Compare this with French peasants.

XL

No doubt about it—'tis a form of madness to expose oneself to passion-love. In some cases, however, the cure works too energetically. American girls in the United States are so saturated and fortified with reasonable ideas, that in that country love, the flower of life, has deserted youth. At Boston a girl can be left perfectly safely alone with a handsome stranger — in all probability she's thinking of nothing but her marriage settlement.

FRAGMENTS XLI-LX

XLI

In France men who have lost their wives are melancholy; widows, on the contrary, merry and lighthearted. There is a proverb current among women on the felicity of this state. So there must be some inequality in the articles of union.

XLII

People who are happy in their love have an air of profound pre-occupation, which, for a Frenchman, is the same as saying an air of profound gloom. (Dresden, 1818.)

XLIII

The more generally a man pleases, the less deeply can he please.

XLIV

As a result of imitation in the early years of life, we contract the passions of our parents, even when these very passions poison our life. (L.'s pride.)

XLV

The most honourable source of feminine pride is a woman's fear of degrading herself in her lover's eyes by some hasty step or some action that he may think unwomanly.

XLVI

Real love renders the thought of death frequent, agreeable, unterrifying, a mere subject of comparison, the price we are willing to pay for many a thing.

XL VII How often have I exclaimed for all my bravery: “If anyone would blow out my brains, I’d thank him before I — expired, if there were time.” A man can only be brave, with the woman he loves, by loving her a little less. (S., February, 1820.)

XLVIII

“I could never love!” a young woman said to me. “Mirabeau and his letters to Sophie have given me a disgust for great souls. Those fatal letters impressed me like a personal experience.”

Try a plan which you never read of in novels; let two years’ constancy assure you, before intimate intercourse, of your lover’s heart.

XLIX

Ridicule scares love. Ridicule is impossible in Italy: what’s good form in Venice is odd at Naples — consequently nothing’s odd in Italy. Besides, nothing that gives pleasure is found fault with. ’Tis this that does away with the fool’s honour and half the farce.

L

Children command by tears, and if people do not attend to their wishes, they hurt themselves on purpose. Young women are piqued from a sense of honour.

LI

’Tis a common reflection, but one for that reason easily forgotten, that every day sensitive souls become rarer, cultured minds commoner.

LII

FEMININE PRIDE

I have just witnessed a striking example — but on mature consideration I should need fifteen pages to give a proper idea of it. If I dared, I would much rather note the consequences; my eyes have convinced me beyond the possibility of doubt. But, no, it is a conviction I must give up all idea of communicating, there are too many little details. Such pride is the opposite of French vanity. So far as I can remember, the only work, in which I have seen a sketch of it, is that part of Madame Roland’s Memoirs, where she recounts the petty reasonings she made as a girl. (Bologna, April 18th, 1 — a m.)

LIII

In France, most women make no account of a young man until they have turned him into a coxcomb. It is only then that he can flatter their vanity. (Duclos.)

LIV

Zilietti said to me at midnight (at the charming Marchesina R...'s): "I'm not going to dine at San Michele (an inn). Yesterday I said some smart things — I was joking with Cl...; it might make me conspicuous."

Don't go and think that Zilietti is either a fool or a coward. He is a prudent and very rich man in this happy land. (Modena, 1820.)

LV

What is admirable in America is the government, not society. Elsewhere government does the harm. At Boston they have changed parts, and government plays the hypocrite, in order not to shock society.

LVI

Italian girls, if they love, are entirely given over to natural inspiration. At the very most all that can aid them is a handful of excellent maxims, which they have picked up by listening at the keyhole. As if fate had decreed that everything here should combine to preserve naturalness, they read no novels — and for this reason, that there are none. At Geneva or in France, on the contrary, a girls falls in love at sixteen in order to be a heroine, and at each

step, almost at each tear, she asks herself: “Am I not just like Julie d’Étanges?”

LVII

The husband of a young woman adored by a lover, whom she treats unkindly and scarcely allows to kiss her hand, has, at the very most, only the grossest physical pleasure, where the lover would find the charms and transports of the keenest happiness that exists on earth.

LVIII

The laws of the imagination are still so little understood, that I include the following estimate, though perhaps it is all quite wrong.

I seem to distinguish two sorts of imagination: — i. — Imagination like Fabio’s, ardent, impetuous, inconsiderate, leading straight to action, consuming itself, and already languishing at a delay of twenty-four hours. Impatience is its prime characteristic; it becomes enraged against that which it cannot obtain. It sees all exterior objects, but they only serve to inflame it. It assimilates them to its own substance, and converts them straight away to the profit of passion.

2. Imagination which takes fire slowly and little by little, but which loses in time the perception of exterior objects, and comes to find occupation and nourishment in nothing but its own passion. This last sort of imagination goes quite easily with slowness, or even scarcity, of ideas. It is favourable to constancy. It is the imagination of the greater part of those poor German girls, who are dying of love and consumption. That sad spectacle, so frequent beyond the Rhine, is never met with in Italy.

LIX

Imaginative habits. A Frenchman is really shocked by eight changes of scenery in one act of a tragedy. Such a man is incapable of pleasure in seeing Macbeth. He consoles himself by damning Shakespeare.

LX

In France the provinces are forty years behind Paris in all that regards women. A. C., a married woman, tells me that she only liked to read certain parts of Lanzi's Memoirs. Such stupidity is too much for me; I can no longer find a word to say to her. As if that were a book one could put down!

Want of naturalness — the great failing in provincial women.

Their effusive and gracious gestures; those who play the first fiddle in the town are worse than the others.

FRAGMENTS LXI-LXXX

LXI

Goethe, or any other German genius, esteems money at what it's worth. Until he has got an income of six thousand francs, he must think of nothing but his banking-account. After that he must never think of it again. The fool,

on his side, does not understand the advantage there is of feeling and thinking like Goethe. All his life he feels in terms of money and thinks of sums of money. It is owing to this support from both sides, that the prosaic in this world seem to come off so much better than the high-minded.

LXII

In Europe, desire is inflamed by constraint; in America it is dulled by liberty.

LXIII

A mania for discussion has got hold of the younger generation and stolen it from love. While they are considering whether Napoleon was of service to France, they let the age of love speed past. Even with those who mean to be young, it is all affectation — a tie, a spur, their martial swagger, their all-absorbing self — and they forget to cast a glance at the girl who passes by so modestly and cannot go out more than once a week through want of means.

LXIV

I have suppressed a chapter on Prudery, and others as well.

I am happy to find the following passage in Horace Walpole's Memoirs:

The Two Elizabeths. Let us compare the daughters of two ferocious men, and see which was sovereign of a civilised nation, which of a barbarous one. Both were Elizabeths. The daughter of Peter (of Russia) was absolute, yet

spared a competitor and a rival; and thought the person of an empress had sufficient allurements for as many of her subjects as she chose to honour with the communication. Elizabeth of England could neither forgive the claim of Mary Stuart nor her charms, but ungenerously imprisoned her (as George IV did Napoleon) when imploring protection, and, without the sanction of either despotism or law, sacrificed many to her great and little jealousy. Yet this Elizabeth piqued herself on chastity; and while she practised every ridiculous art of coquetry to be admired at an unseemly age, kept off lovers whom she encouraged, and neither gratified her own desires nor their ambition. Who can help preferring the honest, open-hearted barbarian empress? (Lord Orford's Memoirs.)

LXV

Extreme familiarity may destroy crystallisation. A charming girl of sixteen fell in love with a handsome youth of the same age, who never failed one evening to pass under her window at nightfall. Her mother invites him to spend a week with them in the country — a desperate remedy, I agree. But the girl was romantic, and the youth rather dull: after three days she despised him.

LXVI

Ave Maria — twilight in Italy, the hour of tenderness, of the soul's pleasures and of melancholy — sensation intensified by the sound of those lovely bells.

Hours of pleasure, which only in memory touch the senses.... (Bologna, April 17th, 1817.)

LXVII

A young man's first love-affair on entering society is ordinarily one of ambition. He rarely declares his love for a sweet, amiable and innocent young girl. How tremble before her, adore her, feel oneself in the presence of a divinity? Youth must love a being whose qualities lift him up in his own eyes. It is in the decline of life that we sadly come back to love the simple and the innocent, despairing of the sublime. Between the two comes true love, which thinks of nothing but itself.

LXVIII

The existence of great souls is not suspected. They hide away; all that is seen is a little originality. There are more great souls than one would think.

LXIX

The first clasp of the beloved's hand — what a moment that is! The only joy to be compared to it is the ravishing joy of power — which statesmen and kings make pretence of despising. This joy also has its crystallisation, though it demands a colder and more reasonable imagination. Think of a man whom, a quarter of an hour ago, Napoleon has called to be a minister.

LXX

The celebrated Johannes von Muller (54) said to me at Cassel in 1808 — Nature has given strength to the North and wit to the South.

LXXI

Nothing more untrue than the maxim: No man is a hero before his valet. Or, rather, nothing truer in the monarchic sense of the word hero — the affected hero, like Hippolytus in Phèdre. Desaix, for example, would have been a hero even before his valet (it's true I don't know if he had one), and a still greater hero for his valet than for anyone else. Turenne and Fénelon might each have been a Desaix, but for "good form" and the necessary amount of force.

LXXII

Here is blasphemy. I, a Dutchman, dare say this: the French possess neither the true pleasures of conversation nor the true pleasures of the theatre; instead of relaxation and complete unrestraint, they mean hard labour. Among the sources of fatigue which hastened on the death of Mme de Staël I have heard counted the strain of conversation during her last winter.

LXXIII

The degree of tension of the nerves in the ear, necessary to hear each note, explains well enough the physical part of one's pleasure in music.

LXXIV

What degrades rakish women is the opinion, which they share with the public, that they are guilty of a great sin.

LXXV

In an army in retreat, warn an Italian soldier of a danger which it is no use running — he'll almost thank you and he'll carefully avoid it. If, from kindness, you point out the same danger to a French soldier, he'll think you're defying him — his sense of honour is piqued, and he runs his head straight against it. If he dared, he'd like to jeer at you. (Gyat, 1812.)

LXXVI

In France, any idea that can be explained only in the very simplest terms is sure to be despised, even the most useful. The Monitorial system (43), invented by a Frenchman, could never catch on. It is exactly the opposite in Italy.

LXXVI I Suppose you are passionately in love with a woman and that your imagination has not run dry. One evening she is tactless enough to say, looking at you tenderly and abashed: "Er — yes — come to-morrow at midday; I shall be in to no one but you." You cannot sleep; you cannot think of anything; the morning is torture. At last twelve o'clock strikes, and every stroke of the clock seems to clash and clang on your heart.

LXXVIII

In love, to share money is to increase love, to give it is to kill love.

You are putting off the present difficulty, and the odious fear of want in the future; or rather you are sowing the seeds of policy, of the feeling of being two. — You destroy sympathy.

LXXIX

Court ceremonies involuntarily call to mind scenes from Aretine — the way the women display their bare shoulders, like officers their uniform, and, for all their charms, make no more sensation!

There you see what in a mercenary way all will do to win a man's approval; there you see a whole world acting without morality and, what's more, without passion. All this added to the presence of the women with their very low dresses and their expression of malice, greeting with a sardonic smile everything but selfish advantage payable in the hard cash of solid pleasures — why! it gives the idea of scenes from the Bagno. It drives far away all doubts suggested by virtue or the conscious satisfaction of a heart at peace with itself. Yet I have seen the feeling of isolation amidst all this dispose gentle hearts to love. (Mars at the Tuileries, 1811.)

LXXX

A soul taken up with bashfulness and the effort to suppress it, is incapable of pleasure. Pleasure is a luxury — to enjoy it, security is essential and must run no risks.

FRAGMENTS LXXXI-C

LXXXI

A test of love in which mercenary women cannot disguise their feelings.—" Do you feel real delight in reconciliation or is it only the thought of what you'll gain by it?"

LXXXII

The poor things who fill La Trappe (55) are wretches who have not had quite enough courage to kill themselves. I except, of course, the heads, who find pleasure in being heads.

LXXXIII

It is a misfortune to have known Italian beauty: you lose your sensibility. Out of Italy, you prefer the conversation of men.

LXXXIV

Italian prudence looks to the preservation of life, and this allows free play to the imagination. (Cf a version of the death of Pertica the famous comic actor, December 24th, 1821.) On the other hand, English prudence, wholly relative to the gain and safe-keeping of just enough money to cover expenses, demands detailed and everyday exactitude, and this habit paralyses the imagination. Notice also how enormously it strengthens the conception of duty.

LXXXV

The immense respect for money, which is the first and foremost vice of Englishmen and Italians, is less felt in France and reduced to perfectly rational limits in Germany.

LXXXVI

French women, having never known the happiness of true passion, are anything but exacting over internal domestic happiness and the everyday side of life. (Compiègne.)

LXXXVII

“You talk to me of ambition for driving away boredom,” said Kamensky: “but all the time I used to gallop a couple of leagues every evening, for the pleasure of seeing the Princess at Kolich, I was on terms of intimacy with a despot whom I respected, who had my whole good fortune in his power and the satisfaction of all my possible desires.”

LXXXVIII

Pretty contrast! On the one hand — perfection in the little niceties of worldly wisdom and of dress, great kindliness, want of genius, daily cult of a thousand and one petty observances, and incapacity for three days’ attention to the same event: on the other — puritan severity, biblical cruelty, strict probity, timid, morbid self-love and universal cant! And yet these are the two foremost nations of the world.

LXXXIX

As among princesses there has been an Empress Catherine II, why should a female Samuel Bernard (56), or a Lagrange (57) not appear among the middle-class?

XC

Alviza calls this an unpardonable want of refinement — to dare to make love by letter to a woman you adore and who looks at you tenderly, but declares that she can never love you.

XCI

It was a mistake of the greatest philosopher that France has had, not to have stayed in some Alpine solitude, in some remote abode, thence to launch his book on Paris without ever coming there himself (58). Seeing Helvétius so simple and straightforward, unnatural, hot-house people like Suard, Marmontel or Diderot could never imagine they had a great philosopher before them. They were perfectly honest in their contempt for his profound reason. First of all, it was simple — a fault unpardonable in France; secondly, the author, not, of course, his book, was lowered in value by this weakness — the extreme importance he attached to getting what in France is called glory, to being, like Balzac, Voiture or Fontenelle, the fashion among his contemporaries.

Rousseau had too much feeling and too little logic, Buffon, in his Botanical Garden, was too hypocritical, and Voltaire too paltry to be able to judge the principle of Helvétius.

Helvétius was guilty of a little slip in calling this principle interest, instead of giving it a pretty name like pleasure; but what are we to think of a nation's literature, which shows its sense by letting itself be led astray by a fault so slight?

The ordinary clever man, Prince Eugene of Savoy for example, finding himself in the position of Regulus, would have stayed quietly at Rome, and even laughed at the stupidity of the Carthaginian Senate. Regulus goes back to Carthage. Prince Eugene would have been prosecuting his own interest, and in exactly the same way Regulus was prosecuting his.

All through life a noble spirit is seeing possibilities of action, of which a common spirit can form no idea. The very second the possibility of that action becomes visible to the noble spirit, it is its interest thus to act.

If this noble spirit did not perform the action, which it has just perceived, it would despise itself — it would be unhappy. Man's duties are in the ratio of

his moral range. The principle of Helvétius holds good, even in the wildest exaltations of love, even in suicide. It is contrary to his nature, it is an impossibility for a man not to do, always and at any moment you choose to take, that which is possible and which gives him most pleasure at that moment to do.

XCII

To have firmness of character means to have experienced the influence of others on oneself. Therefore others are necessary.

XCIII

ANCIENT LOVE

No posthumous love-letters of Roman ladies have been printed. Petronius has written a charming book, but it is only debauch that he has painted.

For love at Rome, apart from Virgil's story of Didoand his second Eclogue, we have no evidence more precise than the writings of the three great poets, Ovid, Tibullus and Propertius.

Now, Parny's Elegies or Colardeau's Letter of Hélïose to Abelard are pictures of a very imperfect and vague kind, if you compare them to some of the letters in the Nouvelle Héloïse, to those of the Portuguese Nun, of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, of Mirabeau's Sophie, of Werther, etc., etc.

Poetry, with its obligatory comparisons, its mythology in which the poet doesn't believe, its dignity of style à la Louis XIV, and all its superfluous

stock of ornaments called poetical, is very inferior to prose when it comes to a question of giving a clear and precise idea of the working of the heart. And, in this class of writing, clearness alone is effective.

Tibullus, Ovid and Propertius had better taste than our poets; they have painted love such as it was to be found among the proud citizens of Rome: moreover, they lived under Augustus, who, having shut the temple of Janus, sought to debase these citizens to the condition of the loyal subjects of a monarchy.

The mistresses of these three great poets were coquettes, faithless and venal women; in their company the poets only sought physical pleasure, and never, I should think, caught a glimpse of the sublime sentiments which, thirteen centuries later, stirred the heart of the gentle Héloïse.

I borrow the following passage from a distinguished man of letters, and one who knows the Latin poets much better than I do: —

The brilliant genius of Ovid, the rich imagination of Propertius, the impressionable heart of Tibullus, doubtless inspired them with verses of a different flavour, but all, in the same manner, they loved women of much the same kind. They desire, they triumph, they have fortunate rivals, they are jealous, they quarrel and make it up; they are faithless in their turn, they are forgiven; and they recover their happiness only to be ruffled by the return of the same mischances.

Corinna is married. The first lessons that Ovid gives her are to teach her the address with which to deceive her husband: the signs they are to make each other before him and in society, so that they can understand each other and be understood only by themselves. Enjoyment quickly follows; afterwards quarrels, and, what you wouldn’t expect from so gallant a man as Ovid, insults and blows; then excuses, tears and forgiveness. Sometimes he addresses himself to subordinates — to the servants, to his mistress’ porter, who is to open to him at night, to a cursed old beldam who corrupts her and teaches her to sell herself for gold, to an old eunuch who keeps watch over her, to a slave-girl who is to convey the tablets in which he begs for a rendezvous. The rendezvous is refused: he curses his tablets, that have had

such sorry fortune. Fortune shines brighter: he adjures the dawn not to come to interrupt his happiness.

Soon he accuses himself of numberless infidelities, of his indiscriminate taste for women. A moment after, Corinna is herself faithless; he cannot bear the idea that he has given her lessons from which she reaps the profit with someone else. Corinna in her turn is jealous; she abuses him like a fury rather than a gentle woman; she accuses him of loving a slave-girl. He swears that there is nothing in it and writes to the slave — yet everything that made Corinna angry was true. But how did she get to know of it? What clue had led to their betrayal? He asks the slave-girl for another rendezvous. If she refuse him, he threatens to confess everything to Corinna. He jokes with a friend about his two loves and the trouble and pleasure they give him. Soon after, it is Corinna alone that fills his thoughts. She is everything to him. He sings his triumph, as if it were his first victory. After certain incidents, which for more than one reason we must leave in Ovid, and others, which it would be too long to recount, he discovers that Corinna's husband has become too lax. He is no longer jealous; our lover does not like this, and threatens to leave the wife, if the husband does not resume his jealousy. The husband obeys him but too well; he has Corinna watched so closely, that Ovid can no longer come to her. He complains of this close watch, which he had himself provoked — but he will find a way to get round it. Unfortunately, he is not the only one to succeed therein. Corinna's infidelities begin again and multiply; her intrigues become so public, that the only boon that Ovid can crave of her, is that she will take some trouble to deceive him, and show a little less obviously what she really is. Such were the morals of Ovid and his mistress, such is the character of their love.

Cynthia is the first love of Propertius, and she will be his last.

No sooner is he happy, but he is jealous. Cynthia is too fond of dress; he begs her to shun luxury and to love simplicity. He himself is given up to more than one kind of debauch. Cynthia expects him; he only comes to her at dawn, leaving a banquet in his cups. He finds her asleep; it is a long time before she wakes, in spite of the noise he makes and even of his kisses; at last she opens her eyes and reproaches him as he deserves. A friend tries to detach him from Cynthia; he gives his friend a eulogy of her beauty and talents. He is threatened with losing her; she goes off with a soldier; she

means to follow the army; she will expose herself to every danger in order to follow her soldier. Propertius does not storm; he weeps and prays heaven for her happiness. He will never leave the house she has deserted; he will look out for strangers who have seen her, and will never leave off asking them for news of Cynthia. She is touched by love so great. She deserts the soldier and stays with the poet. He gives thanks to Apollo and the Muses; he is drunk with his happiness. This happiness is soon troubled by a new access of jealousy, interrupted by separation and by absence. Far from Cynthia, he can only think of her. Her past infidelities make him fear for news. Death does not frighten him, he only fears to lose Cynthia; let him be but certain that she will be faithful and he will go down without regret to the grave.

After more treachery, he fancies he is delivered from his love; but soon he is again in its bonds. He paints the most ravishing portrait of his mistress, her beauty, the elegance of her dress, her talents in singing, poetry and dancing; everything redoubles and justifies his love. But Cynthia, as perverse as she is captivating, dishonours herself before the whole town by such scandalous adventures that Propertius can no longer love her without shame. He blushes, but he cannot shake her off. He will be her lover, her husband; he will never love any but Cynthia. They part and come together again. Cynthia is jealous, he reassures her. He will never love any other woman. But in fact it is never one woman he loves — it is all women. He never has enough of them, he is insatiable of pleasure. To recall him to himself, Cynthia has to desert him yet again. Then his complaints are as vigorous as if he had never been faithless himself. He tries to escape. He seeks distraction in debauch. — Is he drunk as usual? He pretends that a troupe of loves meets him and brings him back to Cynthia's feet. Reconciliation is followed by more storms. Cynthia, at one of their supper parties, gets heated with wine like himself, upsets the table and hits him over the head. Propertius thinks this charming. More perfidy forces him at last to break his chains; he tries to go away; he means to travel in Greece; he completes all his plans for the journey, but he renounces the project — and all in order to see himself once more the butt of new outrages. Cynthia does not confine herself to betraying him; she makes him the laughing-stock of his rivals. But illness seizes her and she dies. She reproaches him with his faithlessness, his caprices and his desertion of her in her last moments, and swears that she herself, in spite of appearances, was always faithful.

Such are the morals and adventures of Propertius and his mistress; such in abstract is the history of their love. Such was the woman that a soul like Propertius was reduced to loving.

Ovid and Propertius were often faithless, but never inconstant. Confirmed libertines, they distribute their homage far and wide, but always return to take up the same chains again. Corinna and Cynthia have womankind for rivals, but no woman in particular. The Muse of these two poets is faithful, if their love is not, and no other names besides those of Corinna and of Cynthia figure in their verses. Tibullus, a tender lover and tender poet, less lively and less headlong in his tastes, has not their constancy. Three beauties are one after the other the objects of his love and of his verses. Delia is the first, the most celebrated and also the best beloved. Tibullus has lost his fortune, but he still has the country and Delia. To enjoy her amid the peaceful fields; to be able, at his ease, to press Delia's hand in his; to have her for his only mourner at his funeral — he makes no other prayers. Delia is kept shut up by a jealous husband; he will penetrate into her prison, in spite of any Argus and triple bolts. He will forget all his troubles in her arms. He falls ill and Delia alone fills his thoughts. He exhorts her to be always chaste, to despise gold, and to grant none but him the love she has granted him. But Delia does not follow his advice. He thought he could put up with her infidelity; but it is too much for him and he begs Delia and Venus for pity. He seeks in wine a remedy and does not find it; he can neither soften his regret nor cure himself of his love. He turns to Delia's husband, deceived like himself, and reveals to him all the tricks she uses to attract and see her lovers. If the husband does not know how to keep watch over her, let her be trusted to himself; he will manage right enough to ward the lovers off and to keep from their toils the author of their common wrongs. He is appeased and returns to her; he remembers Delia's mother who favoured their love; the memory of this good woman opens his heart once more to tender thoughts, and all Delia's wrongs are forgotten. But she is soon guilty of others more serious. She lets herself be corrupted by gold and presents; she gives herself to another, to others. At length Tibullus breaks his shameful chains and says good-bye to her for ever.

He passes under the sway of Nemesis and is no happier; she loves only gold and cares little for poetry and the gifts of genius. Nemesis is a greedy woman who sells herself to the highest bidder; he curses her avarice, but he loves her and cannot live unless she loves him. He tries to move her with

touching images. She has lost her young sister; he will go and weep on her tomb and confide his grief to her dumb ashes. The shade of her sister will take offence at the tears that Nemesis causes to flow. She must not despise her anger. The sad image of her sister might come at night to trouble her sleep.... But these sad memories force tears from Nemesis — and at that price he could not buy even happiness. Neaera is his third mistress. He has long enjoyed her love; he only prays the gods that he may live and die with her; but she leaves him, she is gone; he can only think of her, she is his only prayer; he has seen in a dream Apollo, who announces to him that Neaera is unfaithful. He refuses to believe this dream; he could not survive his misfortune, and none the less the misfortune is there. Neaera is faithless; once more Tibullus is deserted. Such was his character and fortune, such is the triple and all unhappy story of his loves.

In him particularly there is a sweet, all-pervading melancholy, that gives even to his pleasures the tone of dreaminess and sadness which constitutes his charm. If any poet of antiquity introduced moral sensibility into love, it was Tibullus; but these fine shades of feeling which he expresses so well, are in himself; he expects no more than the other two to find them or engender them in his mistresses. Their grace, their beauty is all that inflames him; their favours all he desires or regrets; their perfidy, their venality, their loss, all that torments him. Of all these women, celebrated in the verses of three great poets, Cynthia seems the most lovable. The attraction of talent is joined to all the others; she cultivates singing and poetry; and yet all these talents, which were found not infrequently in courtesans of a certain standing, were of no avail — it was none the less pleasure, gold and wine which ruled her. And Propertius, who boasts only once or twice of her artistic tastes, in his passion for her is none the less seduced by a very different power!

These great poets are apparently to be numbered among the most tender and refined souls of their century — well! this is how they loved and whom. We must here put literary considerations on one side. I only ask of them evidence concerning their century; and in two thousand years a novel by Ducray-Duminil (59) will be evidence concerning the annals of ours.

One of my great regrets is not to have been able to see Venice in 1760. A run of happy chances had apparently united, in so small a space, both the political institutions and the public opinion that are most favourable to the happiness of mankind. A soft spirit of luxury gave everyone an easy access to happiness. There were no domestic struggles and no crimes. Serenity was seen on every face; no one thought about seeming richer than he was; hypocrisy had no point. I imagine it must have been the direct contrary to London in 1822.

XCIV

If in the place of the want of personal security you put the natural fear of economic want, you will see that the United States of America bears a considerable resemblance to the ancient world as regards that passion, on which we are attempting to write a monograph.

In speaking of the more or less imperfect sketches of passion-love which the ancients have left us, I see that I have forgotten the Loves of Medea in the Argonautica (60). Virgil copied them in his picture of Dido. Compare that with love as seen in a modern novel — Le Doyen de Killerine, for example.

XCV

The Roman feels the beauties of Nature and Art with amazing strength, depth and justice; but if he sets out to try and reason on what he feels so forcibly, it is pitiful.

The reason may be that his feelings come to him from Nature, but his logic from government.

You can see at once why the fine arts, outside Italy, are only a farce; men reason better, but the public has no feeling.

XCVI

London, November 20th, 1821.

A very sensible man, who arrived yesterday from Madras, told me in a two hours' conversation what I reduce to the following few lines: —

This gloom, which from an unknown cause depresses the English character, penetrates so deeply into their hearts, that at the end of the world, at Madras, no sooner does an Englishman get a few days' holiday, than he quickly leaves rich and flourishing Madras and comes to revive his spirits in the little French town of Pondicherry, which, without wealth and almost without commerce, flourishes under the paternal administration of M. Dupuy. At Madras you drink Burgundy that costs thirty-six francs a bottle; the poverty of the French in Pondicherry is such that, in the most distinguished circles, the refreshments consist of large glasses of water. But in Pondicherry they laugh.

At present there is more liberty in England than in Prussia. The climate is the same as that of Koenigsberg, Berlin or Warsaw, cities which are far from being famous for their gloom. The working classes in these towns have less security and drink quite as little wine as in England; and they are much worse clothed.

The aristocracies of Venice and Vienna are not gloomy.

I can see only one point of difference: in gay countries the Bible is little read, and there is gallantry. I am sorry to have to come back so often to a demonstration with which I am unsatisfied. I suppress a score of facts pointing in the same direction.

XCVII

I have just seen, in a fine country-house near Paris, a very good-looking, very clever, and very rich young man of less than twenty; he has been left there by chance almost alone, for a long time too, with a most beautiful girl of eighteen, full of talent, of a most distinguished mind, and also very rich. Who wouldn't have expected a passionate love-affair? Not a bit of it — such was the affectation of these two charming creatures that both were occupied solely with themselves and the effect they were to produce.

XCVIII

I am ready to agree that on the morrow of a great action a savage pride has made this people fall into all the faults and follies that lay open to it. But you will see what prevents me from effacing my previous praises of this representative of the Middle Ages.

The prettiest woman in Narbonne is a young Spaniard, scarcely twenty years old, who lives there very retired with her husband, a Spaniard also, and an officer on halfpay. Some time ago there was a fool whom this officer was obliged to insult. The next day, on the field of combat, the fool sees the young Spanish woman arrive. He begins a renewed flow of affected nothings: —

"No, indeed, it's shocking! How could you tell your wife about it? You see, she has come to prevent us fighting!"

"I have come to bury you," she answered.

Happy the husband who can tell his wife everything! The result did not belie this woman's haughty words. Her action would have been considered hardly the thing in England. Thus does false decency diminish the little happiness that exists here below.

XCIX

The delightful Donézan said yesterday: “In my youth, and well on in my career — for I was fifty in’89 — women wore powder in their hair.

“I own that a woman without powder gives me a feeling of repugnance; the first impression is always that of a chamber-maid who hasn’t had time to get dressed.”

Here we have the one argument against Shakespeare and in favour of the dramatic unities.

While young men read nothing but La Harpe (61), the taste for great powdered toupées, such as the late Queen Marie Antoinette used to wear, can still last some years. I know people too, who despise Correggio and Michael Angelo, and, to be sure, M. Donézan was extremely clever.

C

Cold, brave, calculating, suspicious, contentious, for ever afraid of being attracted by anyone who might possibly be laughing at them in secret, absolutely devoid of enthusiasm, and a little jealous of people who saw great events with Napoleon, such was the youth of that age, estimable rather than lovable. They forced on the country that Right-Centre form of government-to-the-lowest-bidder. This temper in the younger generation was to be found even among the conscripts, each of whom only longed to finish his time.

All systems of education, whether given expressly or by chance, form men for a certain period in their life.

The education of the age of Louis XV made twenty-five the finest moment in the lives of its pupils.

It is at forty that the young men of this period will be at their best; they will have lost their suspiciousness and pretensions, and have gained ease and gaiety.

FRAGMENTS CI-CXX

CI

DISCUSSION BETWEEN AN HONEST MAN AND AN ACADEMIC

“In this discussion, the academic always saved himself by fixing on little dates and other similar errors of small importance; but the consequences and natural qualifications of things, these he always denied, or seemed not to understand: for example, that Nero was a cruel Emperor or Charles II a perjurer. Now, how are you to prove things of this kind, or, even if you do, manage not to put a stop to the general discussion or lose the thread of it?

“This, I have always remarked, is the method of discussion between such folk, one of whom seeks only the truth and advancement thereto, the other the favour of his master or his party and the glory of talking well. And I always consider it great folly and waste of time for an honest man to stop and talk with the said academics.” (Œuvres badines of Guy Allard de Voiron.)

CII

Only a small part of the art of being happy is an exact science, a sort of ladder up which one can be sure of climbing a rung per century — and that is the part which depends on government. (Still, this is only theory. I find the Venetians of 1770 happier than the people of Philadelphia to-day.)

For the rest, the art of being happy is like poetry; in spite of the perfecting of all things, Homer, two thousand seven hundred years ago, had more talent than Lord Byron.

Reading Plutarch with attention, I think I can see that men were happier in Sicily in the time of Dion than we manage to be to-day, although they had no printing and no iced punch!

I would rather be an Arab of the fifth century than a Frenchman of the nineteenth.

CIII

People go to the theatre, never for that kind of illusion which is lost one minute and found again the next, but for an opportunity of convincing their neighbour, or at least themselves, that they have read their La Harpe and are people who know what’s good. It is an old pedant’s pleasure that the younger generation indulges in.

CIV

A woman belongs by right to the man who loves her and is dearer to her than life.

CV

Crystallisation cannot be excited by an understudy, and your most dangerous rivals are those most unlike you.

CVI

In a very advanced state of society passion-love is as natural as physical love among savages, (M.)

CVII

But for an infinite number of shades of feeling, to have a woman you adore would be no happiness and scarcely a possibility. (L., October 7th.)

CVIII

Whence comes the intolerance of Stoic philosophers? From the same source as that of religious fanatics. They are put out because they are struggling against nature, because they deny themselves, and because it hurts them. If they would question themselves honestly on the hatred they bear towards those who profess a code of morals less severe, they would have to own that it springs from a secret jealousy of a bliss which they envy and have

renounced, without believing in the rewards which would make up for this sacrifice. (Diderot.)

CIX

Women who are always taking offence might well ask themselves whether they are following a line of conduct, which they think really and truly is the road to happiness. Is there not a little lack of courage, mixed with a little mean revenge, at the bottom of a prude's heart? Consider the ill-humour of Madame de Deshoulières in her last days. (Note by M. Lemontey.) (62.)

CX

Nothing more indulgent than virtue without hypocrisy — because nothing happier; yet even Mistress Hutchinson might well be more indulgent.

CXI

Immediately below this kind of happiness comes that of a young, pretty and easy-going woman, with a conscience that does not reproach her. At Messina people used to talk scandal about the Contessina Vicenzella. "Well, well!" she would say, "I'm young, free, rich and perhaps not ugly. I wish the same to all the ladies of Messina!" It was this charming woman, who would never be more than a friend to me, who introduced me to the Abbé Melli's sweet poems in Sicilian dialect. His poetry is delicious, though still disfigured by mythology.

(Delfante.)

CXII

The public of Paris has a fixed capacity for attention — three days: after which, bring to its notice the death of Napoleon or M. Béranger (63) sent to prison for two months — the news is just as sensational, and to bring it up on the fourth day just as tactless. Must every great capital be like this, or has it to do with the good nature and light heart of the Parisian? Thanks to aristocratic pride and morbid reserve, London is nothing but a numerous collection of hermits; it is not a capital. Vienna is nothing but an oligarchy of two hundred families surrounded by a hundred and fifty thousand workpeople and servants who wait on them. No more is that a capital. — Naples and Paris, the only two capitals. (Extract from Birkbeck's Travels, .)

CXIII

According to common ideas, or reasonable ideas, as they are called by ordinary people, if any period of imprisonment could possibly be tolerable, it would be after several years' confinement, when at last the poor prisoner is only separated by a month or two from the moment of his release. But the ways of crystallisation are otherwise. The last month is more painful than the last three years. In the gaol at Melun, M. d'Hotelans has seen several prisoners die of impatience within a few months of the day of release.

CXIV

I cannot resist the pleasure of copying out a letter written in bad English by a young German woman. It proves that, after all, constant love exists, and that not every man of genius is a Mirabeau. Klopstock, the great poet, passes at Hamburg for having been an attractive person. Read what his young wife wrote to an intimate friend:

“After having seen him two hours, I was obliged to pass the evening in a company, which never had been so wearisome to me. I could not speak, I could not play; I thought I saw nothing but Klopstock; I saw him the next day and the following and we were very seriously friends. But the fourth day he departed. It was a strong hour the hour of his departure! He wrote soon after; from that time our correspondence began to be a very diligent one. I sincerely believed my love to be friendship. I spoke with my friends of nothing but Klopstock, and showed his letters. They raillied at me and said I was in love. I raillied then again, and said that they must have a very friendshipless heart, if they had no idea of friendship to a man as well as to a woman. Thus it continued eight months, in which time my friends found as much love in Klopstock’s letters as in me. I perceived it likewise, but I would not believe it. At the last Klopstock said plainly that he loved; and I startled as for a wrong thing; I answered that it was no love, but friendship, as it was what I felt for him; we had not seen one another enough to love (as if love must have more time than friendship). This was sincerely my meaning, and I had this meaning till Klopstock came again to Hamburg. This he did a year after we had seen one another the first time. We saw, we were friends, we loved; and a short time after, I could even tell Klopstock that I loved. But we were obliged to part again, and wait two years for our wedding. My mother would not let me marry a stranger. I could marry then without her consent, as by the death of my father my fortune depended not on her; but this was a horrible idea for me; and thank heaven that I have prevailed by prayers! At this time knowing Klopstock, she loves him as her lifely son, and thanks God that she has not persisted. We married and I am the happiest wife in the world. In some few months it will be four years that I am so happy....” (Correspondence of Richardson, Vol. III, .)

The only unions legitimate for all time are those that answer to a real passion.

CXVI

To be happy with laxity of morals, one wants the simplicity of character that is found in Germany and Italy, but never in France. (The Duchess de C —)

CXVII

It is their pride that makes the Turks deprive their women of everything that can nourish crystallisation. I have been living for the last three months in a country where the titled folk will soon be carried just as far by theirs.

Modesty is the name given here by men to the exactions of aristocratic pride run mad. Who would risk a lapse of modesty? Here also, as at Athens, the intellectuals show a marked tendency to take refuge with courtesans — that is to say, with the women whom a scandal shelters from the need to affect modesty. (Life of Fox.)

CXVIII

In the case of love blighted by too prompt a victory, I have seen in very tender characters crystallisation trying x to form later. “I don’t love you a bit,” she says, but laughing.

CXIX

The present-day education of women — that odd mixture of works of charity and risky songs (“Di piacer mi balza il cor,” in La Gazza Ladra) (64) — is the one thing in the world best calculated to keep off happiness. This form of education produces minds completely inconsequent. Madame de R — , who was afraid of dying, has just met her death through thinking it funny to throw her medicines out of the window. Poor little women like her take inconsequence for gaiety, because, in appearance, gaiety is often inconsequent. ’Tis like the German, who threw himself out of the window in order to be sprightly.

cxx Vulgarity, by stifling imagination, instantly produces in me a deadly boredom. Charming Countess K — , showing me this evening her lovers’ letters, which to my mind were in bad taste. (Forli, March 17th, Henri.)

Imagination was not stifled: it was only deranged, and very soon from mere repugnance ceased to picture the unpleasant ness of these dull lovers.

FRAGMENTS CXXI-CXL

CXXI

METAPHYSICAL REVERIE

Belgirate, 26th October, 1816.

Real passion has only to be crossed for it to produce apparently more unhappiness than happiness. This thought may not be true in the case of gentle souls, but it is absolutely proved in the case of the majority of men, and particularly of cold philosophers, who, as regards passion, live, one might say, only on curiosity and self-love.

I said all this to the Contessina Fulvia yesterday evening, as we were walking together near the great pine on the eastern terrace of Isola Bella. She answered:

“Unhappiness makes a much stronger impression on a man’s life than pleasure.

“The prime virtue in anything which claims to give us pleasure, is that it strikes hard.

“Might we not say that life itself being made up only of sensation, there is a universal taste in all living beings for the consciousness that the sensations of their life are the keenest that can be? In the North people are hardly alive — look at the slowness of their movements. The Italian’s dolce far niente is the pleasure of relishing one’s soul and one’s emotions, softly reclining on a divan. Such pleasure is impossible, if you are racing all day on horseback or in a drosky, like the Englishman or the Russian. Such people would die of boredom on a divan. There is no reason to look into their souls.

“Love gives the keenest possible of all sensations — and the proof is that in these moments of ‘inflammation,’ as physiologists would say, the heart is open to those complex sensations’ which Helvétius, Buffon and other philosophers think so absurd. The other day, as you know, Luizina fell into the lake; you see, her eye was following a laurel leaf that had fallen from a tree on Isola-Madre (one of the Borromean Islands). The poor woman owned to me that one day her lover, while talking to her, threw into the lake the leaves of a laurel branch he was stripping, and said: ‘ Your cruelty and the calumnies of your friend are preventing me from turning my life to account and winning a little glory.’

“It is a peculiar and incomprehensible fact that, when some great passion has brought upon the soul moments of torture and extreme unhappiness, the soul

comes to despise the happiness of a peaceful life, where everything seems framed to our desires. [A fine country-house in a picturesque position, substantial means, a good wife, three pretty children, and friends charming and numerous — this is but a mere outline of all our host, General C — , possesses. And yet he said, as you know, he felt tempted to go to Naples and take the command of a guerilla band. A soul made for passion soon finds this happy life monotonous, and feels, perhaps, that it only offers him commonplace ideas. 'I wish,' C. said to you, 'that I had never known the fever of high passion.

I wish I could rest content with the apparent happiness on which people pay me every day such stupid compliments, which, to put the finishing touch to, I have to answer politely.'"

I, a philosopher, rejoin: "Do you want the thousandth proof that we are not created by a good Being? It is the fact that pleasure does not make perhaps half as much impression on human life as pain..." The Contessina interrupted me. "In life there are few mental pains that are not rendered sweet by the emotion they themselves excite, and, if there is a spark of magnanimity in the soul, this pleasure is increased a hundredfold. The man condemned to death in 1815 and saved by chance (M. de Lavalette (65), for example), if he was going courageously to his doom, must recall that moment ten times a month. But the coward, who was going to die crying and yelling (the exciseman, Morris, thrown into the lake, Rob Roy) — suppose him also saved by chance — can at most recall that instant with pleasure because he was saved, not for the treasures of magnanimity that he discovered with him, and that take away for the future all his fears."

I: "Love, even unhappy love, gives a gentle soul, for whom a thing imagined is a thing existent, treasures of this kind of enjoyment. He weaves sublime visions of happiness and beauty about himself and his beloved. How often has Salviati heard Léonore, with her enchanting smile, say, like Mademoiselle Mars in Les Fausses Confidences: 'Well, yes, I do love you!' No, these are never the illusions of a prudent mind."

Fulvia (raising her eyes to heaven): "Yes, for you and me, love, even unhappy love, if only our admiration for the beloved knows no limit, is the supreme happiness." (Fulvia is twenty-three, — the most celebrated beauty

of... Her eyes were heavenly as she talked like this at midnight and raised them towards the glorious sky above the Borromean Islands. The stars seemed to answer her. I looked down and could find no more philosophical arguments to meet her. She continued:)

“And all that the world calls happiness is not worth the trouble. Only contempt, I think, can cure this passion; not contempt too violent, for that is torture. For you men it is enough to see the object of your adoration love some gross, prosaic creature, or sacrifice you in order to enjoy pleasures of luxurious comfort with a woman friend.”

CXXII

To will means to have the courage to expose oneself to troubles; to expose oneself is to take risks — to gamble. You find military men who cannot exist without such gambling — that’s what makes them intolerable in home-life.

CXXIII

General Teulié told me this evening that he had found out why, as soon as there were affected women in a drawing-room, he became so horribly dry and floored for ideas. It was because he was sure to be bitterly ashamed of having exposed his feelings with warmth before such creatures. General Teulié had to speak from his heart, though the talk were only of Punch and Judy; otherwise he had nothing to say. Moreover, I could see he never knew the conventional phrase about anything nor what was the right thing to say. That is really where he made himself so monstrously ridiculous in the eyes of affected women. Heaven had not made him for elegant society.

CXXIV

Irréligion is bad form at Court, because it is calculated to be contrary to the interests of princes: irréligion is also bad form in the presence of girls, for it would prevent their finding husbands. It must be owned that, if God exists, it must be nice for Him to be honoured from motives like these.

cxxv For the soul of a great painter or a great poet, love is divine in that it increases a hundredfold the empire and the delight of his art, and the beauties of art are his soul's daily bread. How many great artists are unconscious both of their soul and of their genius! Often they reckon as mediocre their talent for the thing they adore, because they cannot agree with the eunuchs of the harem, La Harpe and such-like. For them even unhappy love is happiness.

CXXVI

The picture of first love is taken generally as the most touching. Why? Because it is the same in all countries and in all characters. But for this reason first love is not the most passionate.

CXXVII

Reason! Reason! Reason! That is what the world is always shouting at poor lovers. In 1760, at the most thrilling moment in the Seven Years' War, Grimm wrote: "... It is indubitable that the King of Russia, by yielding Silesia, could have prevented the war from ever breaking out. In so doing he would have done a very wise thing. How many evils would he have prevented! And what can there be in common between the possession of a

province and the happiness of a king? Was not the great Elector a very happy and highly respected prince without possessing Silesia? It is also quite clear that a king might have taken this course in obedience to the precepts of the soundest reason, and yet — I know not how — that king would inevitably have been the object of universal contempt, while Frederick, sacrificing everything to the necessity of keeping Silesia, has invested himself with immortal glory.

“Without any doubt the action of Cromwell’s son was the wisest a man could take: he preferred obscurity and repose to the bother and danger of ruling over a people sombre, fiery and proud. This wise man won the contempt of his own time and of posterity; while his father, to this day, has been held a great man by the wisdom of nations.

“The Fair Penitent is a sublime subject on the Spanish stage, but spoilt by Otway and Colardeau in England and France. Calista has been dishonoured by a man she adores; he is odious from the violence of his inborn pride, but talent, wit and a handsome face — everything, in fact — combine to make him seductive. Indeed, Lothario would have been too charming could he have moderated these criminal outbursts. Moreover, an hereditary and bitter feud separates his family from that of the woman he loves. These families are at the head of two factions dividing a Spanish town during the horrors of the Middle Age. Sciolto, Calista’s father, is the chief of the faction, which at the moment has the upper hand; he knows that Lothario has had the insolence to try to seduce his daughter. The weak Calista is weighed down by the torment of shame and passion. Her father has succeeded in getting his enemy appointed to the command of a naval armament that is setting out on a distant and perilous expedition, where Lothario will probably meet his death. In Colardeau’s tragedy, he has just told his daughter this news. At his words Calista can no longer hide her passion:

O dieux!

Il — part!... Vous l’ordonnez!... Il a pu s’y résoudre.

“Think of the danger she is placed in. Another word, and Sciolto will learn the secret of his daughter’s passion for Lothario. The father is confounded and cries: — Qu’entends-je? Me trompé-je? Où s’égarent tes voeux? “At this Calista recovers herself and answers: —

Ce n’est pas son exile, c’est sa mort que je veux, Qu’il périsse!

“By these words Calista stifles her father’s rising suspicions; yet there is no deceit, for the sentiment she utters is true. The existence of a man, who has succeeded after winning her love in dishonouring her, must poison her life, were he even at the ends of the earth. His death alone could restore her peace of mind, if for unfortunate lovers peace of mind existed.... Soon after Lothario is killed and, happily for her, Calista dies.

“‘ There’s a lot of crying and moaning over nothing!’ say the chilly folk who plume themselves on being philosophers. ‘Somebody with an enterprising and violent nature abuses a woman’s weakness for him — that is nothing to tear our hair over, or at least there is nothing in Calista’s troubles to concern us. She must console herself with having satisfied her lover, and she will not be the first woman of merit who has made the best of her misfortune in that way.’”

Richard Cromwell, the King of Prussia and Calista, with the souls given them by Heaven, could only find peace and happiness by acting as they did. The conduct of the two last is eminently unreasonable and yet it is those two that we admire. (Sagan, 1813.)

CXXVIII

The likelihood of constancy when desire is satisfied can only be foretold from the constancy displayed, in spite of cruel doubts and jealousy and ridicule, in the days before intimate intercourse.

CXXIX

A woman is in despair at the death of her lover, who has been killed in the wars — of course she means to follow him. Now first make quite sure that it is not the best thing for her to do; then, if you decide it is not, attack her on the side of a very primitive habit of the human kind — the desire to survive. If the woman has an enemy, one may persuade her that her enemy has obtained a warrant for her imprisonment. Unless that threat only increases her desire of death, she may think about hiding herself in order to escape imprisonment. For three weeks she will lie low, escaping from refuge to refuge. She must be caught, but must get away after three days.

Then people must arrange for her to withdraw under a false name to some very remote town, as unlike as possible the one in which she was so desperately unhappy. But who is going to devote himself to the consolation of a being so unfortunate and so lost to friendship? (Warsaw, 1808).

cxxx Academical wise-heads can see a people's habits in its language. In Italy, of all the countries in the world, the word love is least often spoken — always "amicizia" and "avvicinar" (amicizia or friendship, for love; avvicinar, to approach, for courtship that succeeds).

CXXXI

A dictionary of music has never been achieved, nor even begun. It is only by chance that you find the phrase for: "I am angry" or "I love you," and the subtler feelings involved therein. The composer finds them only when passion, present in his heart or memory, dictates them to him. Well! that is why people, who spend the fire of youth studying instead of feeling, cannot be artists — the way that works is perfectly simple.

CXXXII

In France far too much power is given to Women, far too little to Woman.

CXXXIII

The most flattering thing that the most exalted imagination could find to say to the generation now arising among us to take possession of life, of public opinion and of power, happens to be a piece of truth plainer than the light of day. This generation has nothing to continue, it has everything to create. Napoleon's great merit is to have left the road clear.

CXXXIV

I should like to be able to say something on consolation. Enough is not done to console.

The main principle is that you try to form a kind of crystallisation as remote as possible from the source of present suffering.

In order to discover an unknown principle, we must bravely face a little anatomy.

If the reader will consult Chapter II of M. Villermé's work on prisons (Paris, 1820), he will see that the prisoners "si maritano fra di loro" (it is the expression in the prisoners' language). The women also "si maritano fra di loro," and in these unions, generally speaking, much fidelity is shown. That is an outcome of the principle of modesty, and is not observed among the men.

“At Saint-Lazare,” says M. Villermé, page 96, “a woman, seeing a new-comer preferred to her, gave herself several wounds with a knife. (October, 1818.)

“Usually it is the younger woman who is more fond than the other.”

cxxxv Vivacità, leggerezza, soggettissima a prendere puntiglio, occupazione di ogni momento delle apparenze della propria esistenza agli occhi altrui: Ecco i tre gran caratteri di questa pianta che risveglia Europa nell 1808.

Of Italians, those are preferable who still preserve a little savagery and taste for blood — the people of the Romagna, Calabria, and, among the more civilised, the Brescians, Piedmontese and Corsicans.

The Florentine bourgeois has more sheepish docility than the Parisian. Leopold’s spies have degraded him. See M. Courier’s (12) letter on the Librarian Furia and the Chamberlain Puccini.

CXXXVI

I smile when I see earnest people never able to agree, saying quite unconcernedly the most abusive things of each other — and thinking still worse. To live is to feel life — to have strong feelings. But strength must be rated for each individual, and what is painful — that is, too strong — for one man is exactly enough to stir another’s interest. Take, for example, the feeling of just being spared by the cannon shot in the line of fire, the feeling of penetrating into Russia in pursuit of Parthian hordes.... And it is the same with the tragedies of Shakespeare and those of Racine, etc., etc.... (Orcha, August 13, 1812.)

CXXXVII

Pleasure does not produce half so strong an impression as pain — that is the first point. Then, besides this disadvantage in the quantity of emotion, it is certainly not half as easy to excite sympathy by the picture of happiness as by that of misfortune. Hence poets cannot depict unhappiness too forcibly. They have only one shoal to fear, namely, things that disgust. Here again, the force of feeling must be rated differently for monarchies and republics. A Lewis XIV increases a hundredfold the number of disgusting things. (Crabbe's Poems.)

By the mere fact of its existence a monarchy à la Lewis XIV, with its circle of nobles, makes everything simple in Art become coarse. The noble personage for whom the thing is exposed feels insulted; the feeling is sincere — and in so far worthy.

See what the gentle Racine has been able to make of the heroic friendship, so sacred to antiquity, of Orestes and Pylades. Orestes addresses Pylades with the familiar "thou." Pylades answers him "My Lord." And then people pretend Racine is our most touching writer! If they won't give in after this example, we must change the subject.

CXXXVIII

Directly the hope of revenge is possible, the feeling of hatred returns. Until the last weeks of my imprisonment it never entered my head to run away and break the solemn oath I had sworn to my friend. Two confidences these — made this morning in my presence by a gentleman cut-throat who favoured us with the history of his life. (Faenza, 1817.)

CXXXIX

All Europe, put together, could never make one French book of the really good type — the Lettres Persanes, for example.

CXL

I call pleasure every impression which the soul would rather receive than not receive.

I call pain every impression which the soul would rather not receive than receive.

If I want to go to sleep rather than be conscious of my feelings, they are undoubtedly pain. Hence the desire of love is not pain, for the lover will leave the most agreeable society in order to day-dream in peace.

Time weakens pleasures of the body and aggravates its pains.

As for spiritual pleasures — they grow weaker or stronger according to the passion. For example, after six months passed in the study of astronomy you like astronomy all the more, and after a year of avarice money is still sweeter.

Spiritual pains are softened by time — how many widows, really inconsolable, console themselves with time! — Vide Lady Waldegrave — Horace Walpole.

Given a man in a state of indifference — now let him have a pleasure; Given another man in a state of poignant suffering — suddenly let the suffering cease; Now is the pleasure this man feels of the same nature as that of the other? M. Verri (66) says Yes, but, to my mind — No.

Not all pleasures come from cessation of pain.

A man had lived for a long time on an income of six thousand francs — he wins five hundred thousand in the lottery. He had got out of the way of

having desires which wealth alone can satisfy. — And that, by the bye, is one of my objections to Paris — it is so easy to lose this habit there.

The latest invention is a machine for cutting quills. I bought one this morning and it's a great joy to me, as I cannot stand cutting them myself. But yesterday I was certainly not unhappy for not knowing of this machine. Or was Petrarch unhappy for not taking coffee?

What is the use of defining happiness? Everyone knows it — the first partridge you kill on the wing at twelve, the first battle you come through safely at seventeen....

Pleasure which is only the cessation of pain passes very quickly, and its memory, after some years, is even distasteful. One of my friends was wounded in the side by a bursting shell at the battle of Moscow, and a few days later mortification threatened. After a delay of some hours they managed to get together M. Béclar, M. Larrey and some surgeons of repute, and the result of their consultation was that my friend was informed that mortification had not set up. At the moment I could see his happiness — it was a great happiness, but not unalloyed. In the secret depth of his heart he could not believe that it was really all over, he kept reconsidering the surgeons' words and debating whether he could rely on them entirely. He never lost sight completely of the possibility of mortification. Nowadays, after eight years, if you speak to him of that consultation, it gives him pain — it brings to mind unexpectedly a passed unhappiness.

Pleasure caused by the cessation of pain consists in: —

1. Defeating the continual succession of one's own misgivings:

2. Reviewing all the advantages one was on the point of losing.

Pleasure caused by winning five hundred thousand francs consists in foreseeing all the new and unusual pleasures one is going to indulge in.

There is this peculiar reservation to be made. You have to take into account whether a man is too used, or not used enough, to wishing for wealth. If he is not used enough, if his mind is closely circumscribed, for two or three days together he will feel embarrassed; while if he is inclined very often to wish

for great riches, he will find he has used up their enjoyments in advance by too frequently foretasting them.

This misfortune is unknown to passion-love.

A soul on fire pictures to itself not the last favour, but the nearest — perhaps just her hand to press, if, for example, your mistress is unkind to you. Imagination does not pass beyond that of its own accord; you may force it, but a moment later it is gone — for fear of profaning its idol.

When pleasure has run through the length of its career, we fall again, of course, into indifference, but this is not the same indifference as we felt before. The second state differs from the first in that we are no longer in a position to relish with such delight the pleasure that we have just tasted. The organs we use for plucking pleasures are worn out. The imagination is no longer so inclined to offer fancies for the enjoyment of desire — desire is satisfied.

In the midst of enjoyment to be torn from pleasure produces pain.

FRAGMENTS CXLI-CLX

CXLI

With regard to physical love and, in fact, physical pleasure, the disposition of the two sexes is not the same. Unlike men, practically all women are at least susceptible in secret to one kind of love. Ever after opening her first novel at fifteen, a woman is silently waiting for the coming of passion-love, and towards twenty, when she is just over the irresponsibility of life’s first flush, the suspense redoubles. As for men, they think love impossible or ridiculous, almost before they are thirty.

CXLII

From the age of six we grow used to run after pleasure in our parents' footsteps.

The pride of Contessina Nella's mother was the starting-point of that charming woman's troubles, and by the same insane pride she now makes them hopeless. (Venice, 1819.)

CXLIII

ROMANTICISM

I hear from Paris that there are heaps and heaps of pictures to be seen there (Exhibition of 1822), representing subjects taken from the Bible, painted by artists who hardly believe in it, admired and criticised by people who don't believe, and finally paid for by people who don't believe.

After that — you ask why art is decadent.

The artist who does not believe what he is saying is always afraid of appearing exaggerated or ridiculous. How is he to touch the sublime? Nothing uplifts him. (Lettera di Roma, Giugno, 1822.)

CXLIV

One of the greatest poets the world has seen in modern times is, to my mind, Robert Burns, a Scotch peasant, who died of want. He had a salary of seventy pounds as exciseman — for himself, his wife and four children. One cannot help saying, by the way, that Napoleon was more liberal towards his enemy Chénier. Burns had none of the English prudery about him. His was a Roman genius, without chivalry and without honour. I have no space here to tell of his love-affairs with Mary Campbell and their mournful ending. I shall merely point out that Edinburgh is on the same latitude as Moscow — a fact which perhaps upsets my system of climates a little.

"One of Burns' remarks, when he first came to Edinburgh, was that between the men of rustic life and those of the polite world he observed little difference; that in the former, though unpolished by fashion and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation and much intelligence; but that a refined and accomplished woman was a being almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea." (London, November 1st, 1821, Vol. V, .)

CXLV

Love is the only passion that mints the coin to pay its own expenses.

CXLVI

The compliments paid to little girls of three furnish exactly the right sort of education to imbue them with the most pernicious vanity. To look pretty is the highest virtue, the greatest advantage on earth. To have a pretty dress is to look pretty.

These idiotic compliments are not current except in the middle class. Happily they are bad form outside the suburbs — being too easy to pay.

CXLVI I Loretto, September 11th, 1811.

I have just seen a very fine battalion composed of natives of this country — the remains, in fact, of four thousand who left for Vienna in 1809. I passed along the ranks with the Colonel, and asked several of the soldiers to tell me their story. Theirs is the virtue of the republics of the Middle Age, though more or less debased by the Spaniards, the Roman Church, and two centuries of the cruel, treacherous governments, which, one after another, have spoiled the country.

Flashing, chivalrous honour, sublime but senseless, is an exotic plant introduced here only a very few years back.

In 1740 there was no trace of it. Vide de Brosses. The officers of Montenotte (67) and of Rivoli (67) had too many chances of showing their comrades true virtue to go and imitate a kind of honour unknown to the cottage homes from which the soldiery of 1796 was drawn — indeed, it would have seemed to them highly fantastic.

In 1796 there was no Legion of Honour, no enthusiasm for one man, but plenty of simple truth and virtue à la Desaix. We may conclude that honour was imported into Italy by people too reasonable and too virtuous to cut much of a figure. One is sensible of a large gap between the soldiers of'96, often shoeless and coatless, the victors of twenty battles in one year, and the brilliant regiments of Fontenoy, taking off their hats and saying to the English politely: Messieurs, tirez les -premiers — gentlemen, pray begin.

CXLVIII

I am ready to agree that one must judge the soundness of a system of life by the perfect representative of its supporters. For example, Richard Coeur-de-Lion is the perfect pattern on the throne of heroism and chivalrous valour, and as a king was a ludicrous failure.

CXLIX

Public opinion in 1822: A man of thirty seduces a girl of fifteen — the girl loses her reputation.

CL

Ten years later I met Countess Ottavia again; on seeing me once more she wept bitterly. I reminded her of Oginski. “I can no longer love,” she told me. I answered in the poet’s words: “How changed, how saddened, yet how elevated was her character!”

CLI

French morals will be formed between 1815 and 1880, just as English morals were formed between 1668 and 1730. There will be nothing finer, juster or happier than moral France about the year 1900. At the present day it does not exist. What is considered infamous in Rue de Belle-Chasse is an act of heroism in Rue du Mont-Blanc, and, allowing for all exaggeration, people really worthy of contempt escape by a change of residence. One remedy we did have — the freedom of the Press. In the long run the Press gives each man his due, and when this due happens to fall in with public opinion, so it remains. This remedy is now torn from us — and it will somewhat retard the regeneration of morals.

CLII

The Abbé Rousseau was a poor young man (1784), reduced to running all over the town, from morn till night, giving lessons in history and geography. He fell in love with one of his pupils, like Abelard with Héloïse or Saint-Preux with Julie. Less happy than they, no doubt — yet, probably, pretty nearly so — as full of passion as Saint-Preux, but with a heart more virtuous, more refined and also more courageous, he seems to have sacrificed himself to the object of his passion. After dining in a restaurant at the Palais-Royal with no outward sign of distress or frenzy, this is what he wfote before blowing out his brains. The text of his note is taken from the enquiry held on the spot by the commissary and the police, and is remarkable enough to be preserved.

“The immeasurable contrast that exists between the nobility of my feelings and the meanness of my birth, my love, as violent as it is invincible, for this adorable girl and my fear of causing her dishonour, the necessity of choosing between crime and death — everything has made me decide to say good-bye to life. Born for virtue, I was about to become a criminal; I preferred death.” (Grimm, Part III, Vol. II, .)

This is an admirable case of suicide, but would be merely silly according to the morals of 1880.

CLIII

Try as they may, the French, in Art, will never get beyond the pretty.

The comic presupposes “go” in the public, and brio in the actor. The delicious foolery of Palomba, played at Naples by Casaccia, is an impossibility at Paris. There we have the pretty — always and only the pretty — cried up sometimes, it is true, as the sublime.

I don’t waste much thought, you see, on general considerations of national honour.

CLIV

We are very fond of a beautiful picture, say the French — and quite truly — but we exact, as the essential condition of beauty, that it be produced by a painter standing on one leg the whole time he is working. — Verse in dramatic art.

CLV

Much less envy in America than in France, and much less intellect.

CLVI

Since 1530 tyranny à la Philip II has so degraded men’s intellect, has so overshadowed the garden of the world, that the poor Italian writers have not yet plucked up enough courage to invent a national novel. Yet, thanks to the naturalness which reigns there, nothing could be simpler. They need only copy faithfully what stares the world in the face. Think of Cardinal Gonzalvi, for three hours gravely looking for flaws in the libretto of an opera-bouffe, and saying uneasily to the composer: “But you’re continually repeating this word Cozzar, cozzar.”

CLVII

Héloïse speaks of love, a coxcomb of his love — don't you see that these things have really nothing but their name in common? Just so, there is the love of concerts and the love of music: the love of successes that tickle your vanity — successes your harp may bring you in the midst of a brilliant society — or the love of a tender daydream, solitary and timid.

CLVIII

When you have just seen the woman you love, the sight of any other woman spoils your vision, gives your eyes physical pain. I know why.

CLIX

Reply to an objection: —

Perfect naturalness in intimate intercourse can find no place but in passion-love, for in all the other kinds of love a man feels the possibility of a favoured rival.

CLX

In a man who, to be released from life, has taken poison, the moral part of his being is dead. Dazed by what he has done and by what he is about to

experience, he no longer attends to anything. There are some rare exceptions.

FRAGMENTS CLXI-CLXXX

CLXI

An old sea captain, to whom I respectfully offered my manuscript, thought it the silliest thing in the world to honour with six hundred pages so trivial a thing as love. But, however trivial, love is still the only weapon which can strike strong souls, and strike home.

What was it prevented M. de M — , in 1814, from despatching Napoleon in the forest of Fontainebleau? The contemptuous glance of a pretty woman coming into the Bains-Chinois. What a difference in the destiny of the world if Napoleon and his son had been killed in 1814!

CLXII

I quote the following lines from a French letter received from Znaim, remarking at the same time that there is not a man in the provinces capable of understanding my brilliant lady correspondent: —

"... Chance means a lot in love. When for a whole year I have read no English, I find the first novel I pick up delicious. One who is used to the love of a prosaic being — slow, shy of all that is refined, and passionately responsive to none but material interests, the love of shekels, the glory of a fine stable and bodily desires, etc. — can easily feel disgust at the behaviour of impetuous genius, ardent and uncurbed in fancy, mindful of, love,

forgetful of all the rest, always active and always headlong, just where the other let himself be led and never acted for himself. The shock, which genius causes, may offend what, last year at Zithau, we used to call feminine pride, l'orgueil féminin — (is that French?) With the man of genius comes the startling feeling which with his predecessor was unknown — and, remember, this predecessor came to an untimely end in the wars and remains a synonym for perfection. This feeling may easily be mistaken for repulsion by a soul, lofty but without that assurance which is the fruit of a goodly number of intrigues."

CLXIII

"Geoffry Rudel, of Blaye, was a very great lord, prince of Blaye, and he fell in love, without knowing her, with the Princess of Tripoli, for the great goodness and great graciousness, which he heard tell of her from the pilgrims, who came from Antioch. And he made for her many fair songs, with good melodies and suppliant words, and, for the desire he had to see her, he took the cross and set out upon the sea to go to her. And it happened that in the ship a grievous malady took him, in such wise that those that were with him believed him to be dead, but they contrived to bring him to Tripoli into a hostelry, like one dead. They sent word to the countess and she came to his bed and took him in her arms. Then he knew that she was the countess and he recovered his sight and his hearing and he praised God, giving Him thanks that He had sustained his life until he had seen her. And thus he died in the arms of the countess, and she gave him noble burial in the house of the Temple at Tripoli. And then the same day she took the veil for the sorrow she had for him and for his death."

CLXIV

Here is a singular proof of the madness called crystallisation, to be found in Mistress Hutchinson's Memoirs:

"He told to M. Hutchinson a very true story of a gentleman who not long before had come for some time to lodge in Richmond, and found all the people he came in company with bewailing the death of a gentlewoman that had lived there. Hearing her so much deplored, he made enquiry after her, and grew so in love with the description, that no other discourse could at first please him nor could he at last endure any other; he grew desperately melancholy and would go to a mount where theprint of her footwas cut and lie there pining and kissing it all the day long, till at length death in some months' space concluded his languishment. This story was very true." (Vol. I, .)

CLXV

Lisio Visconti was anything but a great reader. Not to mention what he may have seen while knocking about the world, his essay is based on the Memoirs of some fifteen or twenty persons of note. In case it happens that the reader thinks such trifling points worthy of a moment's attention, I give the books from which Lisio drew his reflexions and conclusions: —

The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini.

The novels of Cervantes and Scarron.

Manon Lescaut and Le Doyen de Killerine, by the Abbé Prévôt.

The Latin Letters of Héloïse to Abelard.

Tom Fones.

Letters of a Portuguese Nun.

Two or three stories by Auguste La Fontaine.

Pignotti’s History of Tuscany.

Werther.

Brantôme.

Memoirs of Carlo Gozzi (Venice, 1760) — only the eighty pages on the history of his love affairs,.

The Memoirs of Lauzun, Saint-Simon, d’Epinay, de Staël, Marmontel, Bezenval, Roland, Duclos, Horace Walpole, Evelyn, Hutchinson.

Letters of Mademoiselle Lespinasse.

CLXVI

One of the most important persons of our age, one of the most prominent men in the Church and in the State, related to us this evening (January, 1822), at Madame de M—’s, the very real dangers he had gone through under the Terror.

“I had the misfortune to be one of the most prominent members of the Constituent Assembly. I stayed in Paris, trying to hide myself as best I could, so long as there was any hope of success there for the good cause. At last, as the danger grew greater and greater, while the foreigner made no energetic move in our favour, I decided to leave — only I had to leave without a passport. Everyone was going off to Coblentz, so I determined to make for Calais. But my portrait had been so widely circulated eighteen months before, that I was recognised at the last post. However, I was allowed to pass and arrived at an inn at Calais, where, you can imagine, I did not sleep a wink — and very lucky it was, since at four o’clock in the morning I heard someone pronounce my name quite distinctly. While I got up and was dressing in all haste I could clearly distinguish, in spite of the darkness, the National Guards with their rifles; the people had opened the main door for them and they were entering the courtyard of the inn. Fortunately it was

raining in torrents — a winter morning, very dark and with a high wind. The darkness and the noise of the wind enabled me to escape by the back courtyard and stables. There I stood in the street at seven o'clock in the morning, utterly resourceless!

I imagined they were following me from my inn. Hardly knowing what I was doing, I went down to the port, on to the jetty. I own I had rather lost my head — everywhere the vision of the guillotine floated before my eyes.

A packet-boat was leaving the port in a very rough sea — it was already a hundred yards from the jetty. Suddenly I heard a shout from out at sea, as if I were being called. I saw a small boat approaching. "Hi! sir, come on! We're waiting for you!" Mechanically I got into the boat. A man was in it. "I saw you walking on the jetty with a scared look," he whispered, "I thought you might be some poor fugitive. I've told them you are a friend I was expecting; pretend to be sea-sick and go and hide below in a dark corner of the cabin."

"Oh, what a fine touch!" cried our hostess. She was almost speechless and had been moved to tears by the Abbé's long and excellently told story of his perils. "How you must have thanked your unknown benefactor! What was his name?"

"I do not know his name," the Abbé answered, a little confused.

And there was a moment of profound silence in the room.

CLXVII

THE FATHER AND THE Son (A dialogue of 1787)

The Father (Minister of —): "I congratulate you, my son; it's a splendid thing for you to be invited to the Duke of — ; it's a distinction for a man of your age.

Don’t fail to be at the Palace punctually at six o’clock.” The Son: “I believe, sir, you are dining there also.”

The Father: “The Duke of — is always more than kind to our family, and, as he’s asking you for the first time, he has been pleased to invite me as well.”

The son, a young man of high birth and most distinguished intellect, does not fail to be at the Palace punctually at six o’clock. Dinner was at seven. The son found himself placed opposite his father. Each guest had a naked woman next to him. The dinner was served by a score of lackeys in full livery.

CLXVIII

London, August, 1817.

Never in my life have I been so struck or intimidated by the presence of beauty as to-night, at a concert given by Madame Pasta.

She was surrounded, as she sang, by three rows young women, so beautiful — of a beauty so pure are heavenly — that I felt myself lower my eyes, out of respect instead of raising them to admire and enjoy. This has never happened to me in any other land, not even in my beloved Italy.

CLXIX

In France one thing is absolutely impossible in the arts, and that is “go.” A man really carried away would be too much laughed at — he would look too happy. See a Venetian recite Buratti’s satires.

APPENDIX

ON THE COURTS OF LOVE (68)

THERE were Courts of Love in France from the year 1150 to the year 1200. So much has been proved. The existence of these Courts probably goes back to a more remote period.

The ladies, sitting together in the Courts of Love, gave out their decrees either on questions of law — for example: Can love exist between married people? —

Or on the particular cases which lovers submitted to them.

So far as I can picture to myself the moral side of this jurisprudence, it must have resembled the Courts of the Marshals of France established for questions of honour by Louis XIV — that is, as they would have been, if only public opinion had upheld that institution.

André, chaplain to the King of France, who wrote about the year 1170, mentions the Courts of Love of the ladies of Gascony, of Ermengarde, Viscountess of Narbonne (1144-1194), of Queen Eléonore, of the Countess of Flanders, of the Countess of Champagne (1174).

André mentions nine judgments pronounced by the Countess of Champagne.

He quotes two judgments pronounced by the Countess of Flanders.

Jean de Nostradamus, Life of the Provençal Poets, says (): —

“The ‘tensons’ were disputes of Love, which took place between poets, both knights and ladies, arguing together on some fair and sublime question of love. Where they could not agree, they sent them, that they might get a decision thereon, to the illustrious ladies president who held full and open

Court of Love at Signe and Pierrefeu, or at Romanin, or elsewhere, and they gave out decrees thereon which were called ‘Lous Arrests d’Amours?”

These are the names of some of the ladies who presided over the Courts of Love of Pierrefeu and Signe: —

Stephanette, Lady of Brulx, daughter of the Count of Provence.

Adalarie, Viscountess of Avignon; Alalète, Lady of Ongle; Hermissende, Lady of Posquières; Bertrane, Lady of Urgon; Mabille, Lady of Yères; The Countess of Dye; Rostangue, Lady of Pierrefeu; Bertrane, Lady of Signe; Jausserande of Claustral.” — (Nostradamus, .)

It is probable that the same Court of Love met sometimes at the Castle of Pierrefeu, sometimes at that of Signe. These two villages are just next to each other, and situated at an almost equal distance from Toulon and Brignoles.

In his Life of Bertrand d’Alamanon, Nostradamus says:

“This troubadour was in love with Phanette or Estephanette of Romanin, Lady of the said place, of the house of Gantelmes, who held in her time full and open Court of Love in her castle of Romanin, near the town of Saint-Remy, in Provence, aunt of Laurette of Avignon, of the house of Sado, so often celebrated by the poet Petrarch.”

Under the heading Laurette, we read that Laurette de Sade, celebrated by Petrarch, lived at Avignon about the year 1341; that she was instructed by Phanette of Gantelmes, her aunt, Lady of Romanin; that “both of them improvised in either kind of Provençal rhythm, and according to the account of the monk of the Isles d’Or (69), their works give ample witness to their learning.... It is true (says the monk) that Phanette or Estephanette, as being most excellent in poetry, had a divine fury or inspiration, which fury was esteemed a true gift from God. They were accompanied by many illustrious and high-born ladies of Provence, who flourished at that time at Avignon, when the Roman court resided there, and who gave themselves up to the study of letters, holding open Court of Love, and therein deciding the questions of love which had been proposed and sent to them....

“Guillen and Pierre Balbz and Loys des Lascaris, Counts of Ventimiglia, of Tende and of Brigue, persons of great renown, being come at this time to visit Pope Innocent VI of that name, went to hear the definitions and sentences of love pronounced by these ladies; and astonished and ravished with their beauty and learning, they were taken with love of them.”

At the end of their “tensons” the troubadours often named the ladies who were to pronounce on the questions in dispute between them.

A decree of the Ladies of Gascony runs: —

“The Court of ladies, assembled in Gascony, have laid down, with the consent of the whole Court, this perpetual constitution, etc., etc.”

The Countess of Champagne in a decree of 1174, says: —

“This judgment, that we have carried with extreme caution, is supported by the advice of a very great number of ladies...” In another judgment is found: —

“The knight, for the fraud that has been done him, denounced this whole affair to the Countess of Champagne, and humbly begged that this crime might be submitted to the judgment of the Countess of Champagne and the other ladies.”

“The Countess, having summoned around her sixty ladies, gave this judgment, etc.”

André le Chapelain, from whom we derive this information, relates that the Code of Love had been published by a Court composed of a large number of ladies and knights.

André has preserved for us the petition, which was addressed to the Countess of Champagne, when she decided the following question in the negative: “Can real love exist between husband and wife?”

But what was the penalty that was incurred by disobedience to the decrees of the Courts of Love?

We find the Court of Gascony ordering that such or such of its judgments should be observed as a perpetual institution, and that those ladies who did not obey should incur the enmity of every honourable lady.

Up to what point did public opinion sanction the decrees of the Courts of Love?

Was there as much disgrace in drawing back from them, as there would be to-day in an affair dictated by honour?

I can find nothing in André or Nostradamus that puts me in a position to solve this question.

Two troubadours, Simon Boria and Lanfranc Cigalla, disputed the question: "Who is worthier of being loved, he who gives liberally, or he who gives in spite of himself in order to pass for liberal?"

This question was submitted to the ladies of the Court of Pierrefeu and Signe; but the two troubadours, being discontented with the verdict, had recourse to the supreme Court of Love of the ladies of Romanin.

The form of the verdicts is conformable to that of the judicial tribunals of this period.

Whatever may be the reader's opinion as to the degree of importance which the Courts of Love occupied in the attention of their contemporaries, I beg him to consider what to-day, in 1822, are the subjects of conversation among the most considerable and richest ladies of Toulon and Marseilles.

Were they not more gay, more witty, more happy in 1174 than in 1882?

Nearly all the decrees of the Courts of Love are based on the provisions of the Code of Love.

This Code of Love is found complete in the work of André le Chapelain,

There are thirty-one articles and here they are: —

CODE OF LOVE OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

I. — The allegation of marriage is not a valid plea against love.

II. — Who can dissemble cannot love.

III. — No one can bind himself to two loves at once.

IV. — Love grows continually or wanes.

V. — That which a lover takes from another by force has no savour.

VI. — Generally the male does not love except in full puberty.

VII. — A widowhood of two years is prescribed to one lover for the death of the other.

VIII. — Without over-abundant reason no one ought to be deprived of his rights in love.

IX. — No one can love, unless urged thereto by the persuasion of love (by the hope of being loved).

X. — Love will be driven out by avarice.

XI. — It is not right to love her whom you would be ashamed to ask in marriage.

XII. — True love has no desire for caresses except from the beloved.

XIII. — Love once divulged is rarely lasting.

XIV. — Success too easy takes away the charm of love; obstacles give it worth.

XV. — Everyone who loves turns pale at the sight of the beloved.

XVI. — At the unexpected sight of the beloved the lover trembles.

XVII. — New love banishes old.

XVIII. — Merit alone makes man worthy of love.

XIX. — Love that wanes is quickly out and rarely rekindled.

XX. — The lover is always timid.

XXI. — Real jealousy always increases love’s warmth.

XXII. — Suspicion, and the jealousy it kindles, increases love’s warmth.

XXIII. — He sleeps less and he eats less who is beset with thoughts of love.

XXIV. — Every act of the lover ends in thought of the beloved.

XXV. — The true lover thinks nothing good but what he knows will please the beloved.

XXVI. — Love can deny love nothing.

XXVII. — The lover cannot have satiety of delight in the beloved.

XXVIII. — The slightest presumption causes the lover to suspect the beloved of sinister things.

XXIX. — The habit of too excessive pleasure hinders the birth of love.

XXX. — The true lover is occupied with the image of the beloved assiduously and without interruption.

XXXI. Nothing prevents a woman from being loved by two men, nor a man by two women.

I. Causa conjugii ab amore non est excusatio recta.

II. — Qui non celat amare non potest.

III. — Nemo duplici potest amore ligari.

IV. — Semper amorem minui vel crescere constat.

V. — Non est sapidum quod amans ab invito sumit amante.

VI. — Masculus non solet nisi in plena pubertate amare.

VII. — Biennalis viduitas pro amante defuncto superstiti praescribitur amanti.

VIII. — Nemo, sine rationis excessu, suo debet amore privari.

IX. — Amare nemo potest, nisi qui amoris suasione compellitur.

X. — Amor semper ab avaritia consuevit domiciliis exulare.

XI. — Non decet amare quarum pudor est nuptias affectare.

XII. — Verus amans alterius nisi suae coamantis ex aSectu non cupit amplexus.

XIII. — Amor raro consuevit durare vulgatus.

XIV. — Facilis perceptio contemptibilem reddit amorem, difficilis eum parum facit haberi.

XV. — Omnis consuevit amans in coamantis aspectu pallescere.

XVI. — In repertina coamantis visione, cor tremescit amantis.

XVII. — Novus amor veterem compellit abire.

XVIII. — Probitas sola quemcumque dignum facit amore.

XIX. — Si amor minuatur, cito deficit et raro convalescit.

XX. — Amorosus semper est timorosus.

XXI. — Ex vera zelotypia affectus semper crescit amandi.

XXII. — De coamante suspicione percepta zelus interea et affectus crescit amandi.

XXIII. — Miftus dormit et edit quem amoris cogitatio vexat.

XXIV. — Quilibet amantis actus in coamantis cogitatione finitur.

Here is the preamble of a judgment given by a Court of Love:

Question: Can true love exist between married people?

Judgment of the Countess of Champagne: We pronounce and determine by the tenour of these presents, that love cannot extend its powers over two married persons; for lovers must grant everything, mutually and

gratuitously, the one to the other without being constrained thereto by any motive of necessity; while husband and wife are bound by duty to agree the one with the other and deny each other in nothing.... Let this judgment, which we have passed with extreme caution and with the advice of a great number of other ladies, be held by you as the truth, unquestionable and unalterable.

In the year 1174, the third day from the Calends of May, the Vllth: indiction.

XXV. — Verus amans nihil beatum credit, nisi quod cogitat amanti placere.

XXVI. — Amor nihil posset amori denegare.

XXVII. — Amans coamantis solatiis satiari non potest.

XXVIII. — Modica praesumptio cotit amantem de coamante suspicari sinistra. —

XXIX. — Non solet amare quem nimia voluptatis abundantia vexat.

XXX. — Verus amans assidua, sine intermissione, coamantis imagine detinetur.

XXXI. — Unam feminam nihil prohibet a duobus amari, et a duabus mulieribus unum. (Fol. 103.)

NOTE ON ANDRÉ LE CHAPELAIN (70)

ANDRE Le CHAPELAIN appears to have written about the year 1176.

In the Bibliothèque du Roi may be found a manuscript (No. 8758) of the work of André, which was formerly in the possession of Baluze. Its first title is as follows: “Hic incipiunt capitula libri de Arte amatoria et reprobatione amoris.”

This title is followed by the table of chapters.

Then we have the second title: —

“Incipit liber de Arte amandi et de reprobatione amoris editus et compillatus a magistro Andrea, Francorum aulae regiæ capellano, ad Galterium amicum suum, cupientem in amoris exercitu militari: in quo quidem libro, cujusque gradus et ordinis mulier ab homine cujusque conditionis et status ad amorem sapientissime invitatur; et ultimo in fine ipsius libri de amoris reprobatione subjungitur.”

Crescimbeni, Lives of the Provençal Poets, sub voce Percivalle Boria, cites a manuscript in the library of Nicolo Bargiacchi, at Florence, and quotes various passages from it. This manuscript is a translation of the treatise of André le Chapelain. The Accademia della Crusca admitted it among the works which furnished examples for its dictionary.

There have been various editions of the original Latin. Frid. Otto Menckenius, in his Miscellanea Li-psiensia nova, Leipsic 1751, Vol. VIII, part I, p and fï., mentions a very old edition without date or place of printing, which he considers must belong to the first age of printing: “Tractatus amoris et de amoris remedio Andreae cappellani Innocentii papae quarti.”

A second edition of 1610 bears the following title: —

“Erotica seu amatoria Andreae capellani regii, vetustissimi scriptoris ad venerandum suum amicum Guualterium scripta, nunquam ante hac édita, sed saepius a multis desiderata; nunc tandem fide diversorum MSS. codicum in publicum emissa a Dethmaro Mulhero, Dorpmundae, typis Westhovianis, anno Una Caste et Vere amanda.”

A third edition reads: “Tremoniae, typis Westhovianis, anno André divides thus methodically the subjects which he proposes to discuss: —

1. Quid sit amor et unde dicatur.

2. Quis sit effectus amoris.

3. Inter quos possit ésçp amor.

4. Qualiter amor acquiratur, retineatur, augmentetur, minuatur, finiatur.

5. De notitia mutui amoris, et quid unus amantium agere debeat, altero fidem fallente.

Each of these questions is discussed in several paragraphs.

Andreas makes the lover and his lady speak alternately. The lady raises objections, the lover tries to convince her with reasons more or less subtle. Here is a passage which the author puts into the mouth of the lover: —

“... Sed si forte horum sermonum te perturbet obscuritas, eorum tibi sententiam indicabo Ab antiquo igitur quatuor sunt in amore gradus distincti:

Primus, in spei datione consistit.

Secundus, in osculi exhibitione.

Tertius, in amplexus fruitione.

Quartus, in totius concessione personae finitur.”

A LIFE OF ROSSINI

Anonymous translation, 1824

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CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE WORKS OF GIOACCHINO ROSSINI, BORN, AT PESARO, The 29th of FEBRUARY, 1792.

Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792–1868) was a renowned Italian composer, who wrote 39 operas, as well as sacred music, chamber music, songs and piano pieces.

PREFACE.

THERE is no man, who, during the last twelve years, has been more frequently the subject of conversation, from Moscow to Naples, from London to Vienna, from Paris to Calcutta, than the subject of these memoirs. His glory already knows no other bounds than those of civilization, and yet he has scarcely attained his thirty-second year.

The object of the following pages is to attempt a sketch of the circumstances that have tended to place him, at so early an age, on such a point of eminence.

The title upon which the present writer founds his claim to the confidence of the reader, is his having resided during the last ten years, in the cities which Rossini has delighted by the master-pieces of his art. The author has journeyed many a league, in order to be present at the first representation of several of his operas; he has, therefore, been placed in the way of hearing all the little anecdotes current in society, as well at Milan and Venice, as at Rome and Naples, at the time these operas were claiming the public attention.

The author of this work has also written two or three others, mostly upon subjects of a light nature. The critics have told him, that, before putting pen to paper, he ought to have furnished himself with certain oratorical and academical requisites, &c. — that he would never be able to make a book, &c. — that he would never have the honour to be a man of letters. Well, be it so, and yet certain persons whom I leave it to the public to name, have so modified the latter title, that certain other persons may, perhaps, think themselves very lucky in never being honoured with it.

Let the present book, therefore, be considered as no book at all. After the fall of Napoleon, the writer, unwilling to pass the best season of his life a dupe to political animosities, set out upon his rambles through the world. Finding himself in Italy at the time Rossini was enjoying such extraordinary success,

and being then engaged in a correspondence with some friends in England and Poland, this subject naturally formed a prominent feature in it.

It is from the letters written at this period, that the author has, in a great measure, drawn the materials which form the present volume: it will not be read from any merits of its own, but merely from the interest that is felt with regard to Rossini. In whatever manner, say they, his history be written, it cannot fail to please, and the greater portion of the present materials were collected on the spot, and while the little events they record possessed a living interest.

I make no doubt but that some inaccuracies will be found amidst the variety of little details that fill the following pages. It is no easy task to write the memoirs of a cotemporary, much less those of Rossini, whose life leaves few other traces than the recollection of the agreeable sensations which he has awakened in our minds. It were to be wished that this great artist, who is, at the same time, one of the most agreeable of men, had undertaken the task of writing his own Memoirs, after the manner of Goldoni. As he is possessed of a hundred times more wit than Goldoni, and never waives his joke upon any occasion, his Memoirs could not have been otherwise than piquant and interesting. All I hope is, that the present life of Rossini may be found incorrect enough to put him out of humour with my temerity, and stimulate him to write one himself. But, before he does get out of humour, let me hasten to assure him that I feel the highest respect for his person and talents; more, indeed, than for any other man living, however great his wealth, or exalted his rank. The latter — to use a phrase of Rossini's own — has gained a prize in the lottery of fortune, while he himself has gained the same in the lottery of nature; — and I may be allowed to add, a prize, the value of which no years will impair.

Montmorency, Sept. 30, 1823.

INTRODUCTION.

To enable the reader to form a correct idea of the talents of Rossini, and the rank he is entitled to hold in the art, it will be proper to take a rapid view of the inter-regnum that took place between Cimarosa and the subject of the present memoir, from 1800 to 1812. It is a melancholy reflection; but the truth of which cannot, after due examination, be called in question, that the beau ideal of music undergoes a change about every thirty years. Hence, in seeking to give a correct idea of the revolution brought about by Rossini, it will not be necessary to revert to a more distant epoch than that of Cimarosa and Paisiello.

Cimarosa died at Venice, the 11th of January, 1801, in consequence of the barbarous treatment he had experienced at Naples, where, on account of his having devoted his talents to celebrate the new state of things, he was doomed to linger for some time in prison.

Paisiello died only in 1816; but it may with truth be said, that, during the present century, the genius of the amiable and graceful, rather than brilliant and energetic, author of “Il Re Teodoro,” and “ha Scuffiara,” had ceased to be productive. The musical talent developes itself early, and but too frequently is as rapidly extinguished.

Cimarosa produces an impression on the imagination by long musical periods, which, to great richness, unite great regularity. In proof of this, I might cite the two first duets of the “Matrimonio secreto and particularly the second, “Io ti lascio perche finiti.” These airs are the most beautiful that the human mind can conceive; but they are perfectly regular, and it is a regularity which the mind perceives without an effort. This is the misfortune: once acquainted with one or two of his airs, we know the rest, and, from the very beginning, foresee in some measure all that is to follow. The whole mischief lies in this word foresee, and it is in the secret of avoiding this error, that we shall find much of the success and glory of Rossini to consist.

Paisiello has not the power to awaken such profound emotions as Cimarosa; the images he awakens in the mind of his hearers seldom rise beyond the graceful; but he is admirable in this respect. His grace is that of Corregio, tender, rarely piquant, but seductive and irresistible. In proof of this I might adduce the quartett from “La Molinara,”

“Quelli là.” Paisiello has the remarkable custom of repeating the same trait in an air several times over, and yet every time with a fresh grace, that impresses it more forcibly on the mind of the hearers. Nothing is more opposite to the style of Cimarosa, sparkling with fancy, and full of energy and passion. Rossini also repeats himself, but he does it not expressly; what is a grace in Paisiello, is but indolence with him. But, lest I should be ranked among the detractors of this amiable man, I hasten to add, that he alone, among the moderns, deserves to be compared to the two great masters who ceased to shine towards the commencement of the nineteenth century.

After Cimarosa, and when Paisiello had ceased to write, music languished in Italy, and felt the want of an original genius. Rossini had composed something previous to 1812, but it was not till this year that he found an opportunity of composing for the grand theatre of Milan. In order to form a just estimate of his talents, we must take a rapid view of the composers who obtained any success from 1810 till 1812. After Cimarosa, and before the appearance of Rossini, two names present themselves, Mayer and Paër.

Mayer, a German, who finished his education in Italy, and has resided for a number of years at Bergamo, has written some fifty operas between 1795 and 1820, and obtained considerable success. There is much in his works to surprise and to please the ear. His talent principally consists in his orchestra, and the rich stores of harmony, which he has lavished to profusion in his ritornellos, and the accompaniments of his airs. If his fort does not lie in making the human voice sing, at least he has made his instruments speak.

His “Lodoiska,” given in 1800, eclipsed all the music of that period. This was followed, in 1801, by “Le due Gironate and, in 1802, by the “Misteri Eleusini,” which made as much noise in that day, as “Il Don Giovanni” has in our own; but the latter opera was not then known in Italy, and was considered as of too difficult execution. “I Misteri Eleusini,” passed for the most brilliant and powerful work of that period. The march of the art was

extraordinary; rapid strides were made from melody to harmony. The Italian masters quitted the easy and the simple, for the difficult and the learned.

Messrs. Mayer and Paër, being possessed of profound science, made a grand dash, and accomplished that which the other maestri only attempted with timidity, and by committing at every step a hundred faults against grammar. This gave these composers a false air of genius; and what tended to complete the illusion was, that they were really possessed of considerable talent.

It was a misfortune for these authors that Rossini came ten years too early. The epoch of a composer's musical era is, as we before remarked, limited to a period of about thirty years; these masters have, therefore, to lament that it was not allowed them quietly to finish their stated period. Had Rossini not appeared till 1820, Messrs. Mayer and Paër might have figured in the annals of music, and ranked with a Leo, a Durante, a Scarlatti, &c great masters of the first order, who enjoyed their period of renown.

Mayer is the most learned, as well as the most prolific, master of the inter-regnum; every thing with him is correct and according to rule. You may examine all the scores of his "Medea," "Cora," "Adelasio," and "Elisa" without finding a single fault. It is the desperate perfection of a Boileau; one cannot imagine why one is not moved. Pass from this to an opera of Rossini, and you find yourself at once in the fresh and pure air of the Alps; you seem to breathe more at large; you at once feel the difference between the productions of genius and those of science. The young composer scatters abroad his ideas with a liberal hand; sometimes he is successful, at ethers he fails of his object. It is all negligence, all disorder; it is a thoughtless squandering of riches that have no end. To sum up all in one word, Mayer is the most correct composer; Rossini the greater artist. Mayer is to music, what Johnson was to English prose; he created a powerful and emphatic manner of his own, which was very far from nature and true beauty, but which nevertheless has its merit, and pleases, especially when we become accustomed to it. But Rossini came with his more free and natural style, and at once drew off the attention of the world from the ponderous magnificence of Mayer. Such is the fate that awaits all affectation in the fine arts: nature and true beauty are sure to predominate in the end, and the world feels astonished how it could have been a dupe so long.

M. Paer, in spite of his German name, is a native of Parma; and, after M. Mayer, is, of all the composers of the inter-regnum, the one that has enjoyed the greatest success. This, independent of his great and incontestable talents, may be attributed to other causes. He is a man of very agreeable manners, much wit, and considerable address. His being able to keep the Parisians for eight years strangers to Rossini, is cited as a proof of the eminent degree in which he excels in the latter qualification. For, if ever there was a composer formed to please the French, it is Rossini; Rossini is the Voltaire of music.

One of the first productions of M. Paer, is "L'Oro fa tutto," which was composed in 1793. "La Griselda," his chef-d'œuvre, appeared in 1797. But why speak of an opera that has made the tour of Europe? Besides this, all the world admires "Sargine," which was produced in 1803. I should not hesitate to rank these two operas above all the rest of M. Paer's productions. "L'Agnese" does not appear to me to merit a place in the same class. It owes its success to the powerful fidelity with which it paints one of the severest inflictions with which humanity can be visited. The dreadful spectacle of a father driven to madness by the desertion of his daughter, is calculated to produce a powerful effect upon the mind, and easily dispose it to receive the impressions of music. Galli, Pellegrini, and particularly Ambrogetti, have been sublime in this character. But, however successful the attempt, I cannot but think that the fine arts ought never to avail themselves of subjects of horror. The filial piety of Cordelia consoles me for the madness of Lear; but nothing can render the frightful situation to which the father of Agnese is reduced, supportable. Music only serves to double our sensibility, and to render the scene more painful, by giving it an additional reality.

After speaking thus in full of the two leading names of this period, it only remains to give a list of composers of secondary abilities: they are as follows: — Anfossi, Coccia, Farinelli, Federici, Fioravanti, Generali, the two Guglielmi (father and son), Manfroce, Martini, Mosca, Nazolini, Nicolini, Orgitano, Orlandi, Pavesi, Portogallo, Salieri, Sarti, Tarchi, Trento, Weigl, Winter, Zingarelli.

The reader will doubtless be surprised to find me introducing the name of Mozart, as belonging to this period: I intreat his indulgence till he hears the reasons that have induced me so to do. While the musical scene in Italy was occupied by the composers above named, who all flattered themselves with

being the legitimate successors of Cimarosa and Paisiello; and at the moment the public were beginning to persuade themselves of the same, a colossus was suddenly seen to appear in the midst of these lesser composers, who were only great by the absence of great men.

Mayer, Paer, and their imitators, had for a long time been endeavouring to adapt the German to the Italian taste, and, as half-measures please the feeble-minded of both parties, they gained considerable success with those whose admiration is not difficult of attainment. Mozart, on the contrary, like all great artists, had no other wish than to please himself, and those of his stamp; he never once dreamed of flattering or being flattered.

Besides, his personal presence was wanted; he was not there to pay his court to the great, — to bribe the venal journalist, in order to have his name in every mouth: the consequence was, that, till after his death, he was scarcely known beyond the limits of Germany. His rivals were always on the spot, — wrote their music for the voices of particular actors, — composed little duos for the prince's mistress, — and found a thousand other little ways of securing interest and protection: and, yet, what is one of their operas when placed by the side of Mozart? Nay, the public feeling in Italy, about the year 1800, was altogether the reverse of favorable. At that time Mozart was considered little better than a romantic barbarian, who sought to invade the classical territory of the fine arts. It must not be imagined that this revolution, which seems so very simple now it is brought about, took place in a day.

Mozart, when still a lad, had composed two operas for the theatre of the Scala at Milan: "Mitradate" in 1770, and "Lucio Silla," in 1773. These operas were not wanting in success; but it is not probable that a lad of fourteen could stem the current of fashion. Besides, whatever might be the merit of these works, they were soon swallowed up in the torrent, and overwhelmed by the then all-powerful names of Sacchini, Piccini, and Paisiello.

About the year 1803, the news of the splendid triumphs which Mozart's music was obtaining at Munich and Vienna, reached the ears of the dilettanti of Italy. At first it excited some little commotion, but it was soon quieted by their resolute incredulity. A barbarian reap laurels in the field of the arts!

They had long been acquainted with his Symphonies and Quartettos; but, Mozart compose music for the voice! The same was said of him in Italy, as had been said of Shakspeare in France, by the partisans of the old system. “He is a barbarian, not wanting in energy; some grains of gold were found in the refuse of Ennius; had he but been fortunate enough to profit by the lessons of Zingarelli or Paisiello, he might have done something.” They contented themselves with these observations, and nothing further was said respecting Mozart.

In 1807, some Italians of distinction, whom Napoleon had taken into his suite, and whom circumstances brought to Munich, fell into conversation about Mozart; the result of which was, that they came to a resolution of trying one of his pieces, — the “Entfiihrung dem Serail,” I believe. But, to do justice to this opera, it was requisite to be a perfect symphonist; above all, it was necessary to be an excellent timist, and never to take any liberty with the text. It was no longer a question of music that can be repeated by rote, on hearing it sung once or twice over, like the “C’est l’Amour,” or the “Di tanti palpiti.” The Italian symphonists set to work, but nothing could they make of the ocean of notes that blackened the score of this northern artist. Above all, it was necessary that time should be scrupulously observed; that they should start together and come out at the last note, exactly at a given moment. Indolent amateurs would term such scrupulosity mere barbarism: this word was on the point of escaping from their lips, and they were on the very verge of abandoning Mozart for ever. However, certain young men of consideration, whom I could name, and who had more pride than vanity, could not persuade themselves but that it was ridiculous for Italians to give up music as too difficult. They threatened to withdraw their protection from the theatre, if the German opera, then in rehearsal, was not produced; and at last the work of Mozart was given, but

“Heu! quantum mutatus ab illo.”

Poor Mozart! Many of those who were present at this first representation, and who afterwards learnt to set a due value on the works of this great man, have assured me that a more lamentable massacre could hardly be imagined. The concerted pieces, and particularly the finales, produced a cacophony that

was altogether alarming: it seemed as if a pandemonium of evil spirits had broke loose. Two or three airs, and a duetto, were the only things that floated above the surface of this ocean of discord.

The same evening two parties were formed.

The patriotism of the antichamber, to use the expression of a celebrated critic, that great moral malady of the Italians, — was aroused in all its fury, and issued its mandate through all the cafés, that no man born out of Italy would ever be able to compose a good air. The Chevalier M. was heard to pronounce the following sentence, in that measured solemnity of tone which so strongly characterises him: “Gli accompagnamenti tedeschi non sono guardie d’onore pell canto, ma gendarmi.”

The other party, headed by two or three young officers, who had been at Munich, maintained that there were in Mozart, not only several concerted pieces, but two or three little airs and duets, that had genius, — and, what was more than all, had novelty in them. The sticklers for the national honour had recourse to their grand argument, that a man must be a bad Italian who could admire music made by an ultra-montanist. In the midst of these contests, the representations of Mozart’s opera reached their term, the orchestra playing worse and worse every evening. The better sort of people observed, “As the name of Mozart excites such hatred; as people are so desperate in their resolution to prove that he is mediocre; as we see him loaded with reproaches, from which even Nicolini and Pucitta (two of the feeblest composers of the day,) have escaped, it is very possible that this stranger may have some genius.”

This is what was said in the Contessa Bianca’s box, as well as in those of some of the first people of distinction in the town. I pass over in silence the gross abuse lavished in the public journals; every one knows that these were written by the agents of the police. The cause of Mozart seemed lost, — and scandalously lost.

A noble and rich amateur, one of that class of persons who have no great sense of their own, but who contrive to gain all the credit of it, by adopting

every six months some paradox, which they furiously maintain on every occasion: this nobleman, having learnt, by a letter from one of his mistresses in Vienna, that Mozart was the first musician in the world, began to talk of it with an air of great mystery. He sent for the six best symphonists of the town, whom he first dazzled by the splendour of his mansion, and amazed by the fracas of his English horses, and calashes manufactured in London, and then set them to play over to him, in private, the first finale of "Il Don Giovanni." His palace was immense; he immediately gave up to them a whole range of apartments. He threatened vengeance to any one who should dare utter a word about the business; and, when a rich man does this in Italy, there is no danger of his not being obeyed.

It took no less than six months for the prince's musicians to accomplish their task, and play the first finale of "Don Giovanni" in just time. Then, for the first moment, they began to see Mozart. The nobleman engaged six singers, whom he bound down to secrecy. After two months' sedulous practice, they were perfect in their parts. After this, the finales, and the principal concerted pieces of the opera, were rehearsed at the nobleman's country-house, and with all the profound secrecy of a conspiracy. He had an ear, like all the rest of his countrymen, and found the music admirable. Secure of his object, he began to speak of Mozart with less reserve; he allowed himself to be attacked in various quarters; and at length laid a wager, which did not fail to excite universal interest, and to form the grand topic of conversation through the whole of that part of Lombardy. The wager he laid was, that he would cause certain pieces of "Don Giovanni" to be executed, and that Messieurs So-and-so, impartial judges, who were chosen upon the spot, should pronounce that Mozart was a composer not inferior to Mayer and Paër, erring, like them, through an overweening fondness for German noise and racket, but, upon the whole, much upon a par with the authors of "Sargine" and "Cora." The other party was ready to burst with laughter; they knew that their good friend was not very bright, but this wager was the dullest of the dull things he had ever been guilty of. The nobleman, who prided himself not a little upon the clever scheme he had planned, retarded the grand day of trial under various pretexts, in order to gain time, and come more fully prepared into the field. At length the important day arrived. The concert took place at his country-house, the music went off to admiration, and he gained his wager without a dissenting voice. This brilliant exploit served him as a

topic of conversation for years afterwards, and he gained the credit of being less a fool by half than he was formerly.

This event made considerable stir; Mozart was in every one's mouth, his music was eagerly enquired after, and at last his operas were brought forward. "Don Giovanni" was given in Rome, about 1811; the parts were not sung amiss, but the orchestra was sadly puzzled with this new and difficult music. The time was any thing but correct; the instruments ran along one after the other, in a manner very amusing to any one but a good musician; it was like a symphony of Haydn played by a party of amateurs, from which, heaven deliver us! In fine, in 1814, "Don Giovanni" was given at the Scala, and the success it obtained was incredible. In 1816, the "Flauto Magico" was also attempted, but it fell, and in its fall drew down ruin upon the poor Chevalier Petracchi; however, "Don Giovanni" was resumed, and received with an enthusiasm little short of extravagance, if indeed extravagance it can be called, when Mozart is in question.

At present, Mozart is tolerably well understood in Italy, but he is far from being felt as he ought to be.

According to the general opinion, the principal effect of his works has been to place in the second rank, Mayer, Weigl, Winter, and the rest of the German faction.

In this view of the subject he may be said to have smoothed the way for Rossini, the zenith of whose reputation may be fixed about the year 1815, and who, on his appearance on the musical horizon, found no other rivals of his splendour than Pavesi, Mosca, Guglielmi Generali, Portagallo, Nicolini, and certain other imitators of the style of Cimarosa and Paisiello. These gentlemen played about the same part, as did with us the last copyists of the style and manner of Racine. They were sure of being applauded at the time, and cried up to the skies; but, strange to say, their admirers always found a certain portion of ennui at bottom; and at rising up from the entertainment, were half inclined to be angry with themselves for the praises they had bestowed. No one, at the time, had the courage to say that it was dull; on the contrary, every body, half yawning, endeavoured to convince his neighbour that it was all very charming.

After a resistance of above ten years, the Italians have ceased to be hypocrites in speaking of Mozart. But he will never obtain the success among them which he enjoys in Germany and England. The reason is evident: his music is not calculated for the climate. Its distinguishing characteristic is that of touching the deeper feelings of the soul, by awakening melancholy images, by bidding us dwell upon the sorrows of the most tender, though frequently the most unhappy, of the passions. Love is not the same at Naples and at Konigsberg; in Italy it is more vivid, more impatient, more impetuous, nourishing itself less upon the imagination. It does not make itself master of the faculties of the soul by little and little, and for ever; it takes it by assault, and carries it entirely, and in an instant: it is a furor, but furor is not melancholy: it is the impulse of all the powers of the soul, and melancholy is the absence of them. Italian love has not been painted, that I know of, in any native romance. This nation has no romances, but it has Cimarosa, who, in the language of his country, has painted love in a superior manner, and with all its shades of feeling, from that of the tender Carolina, in the "Ah! tu sai ch' io vivo in pene," to that of the dotard, in "Jo venia per sposarti."

But let us return to Mozart, and to his airs, so full of violence, as the Italians term it. He appeared on the Italian horizon at the same time with Rossini, about the year 1812; but I have my doubts whether he will not be still spoken of, when the star of Rossini shall "'gin to pale his ineffectual fires." Mozart is an inventor in all points, and in every sense of the word; he resembles no other composer, while Rossini resembles many.

The science of harmony may make whatever progress it pleases, still it will be seen, with astonishment, that all that can be done has already been anticipated by Mozart. Hence, as to what regards the mechanical branch of his art, he can never be surpassed: to attempt it, would be folly; — it would be like the painter who should undertake to surpass Titian in strength and truth of colouring, or the poet, Racine, in beauty of versification and delicacy of sentiment.

In a moral point of view, there is no comparison between Rossini and Mozart. The latter, "in the very tempest and whirlwind of his passion," is sure to hurry the soul away with irresistless force. Then, he is the very musician of melancholy: so strong, so distinct, so real, is the imagery in

which he presents it to the soul, that minds possessed of the least enthusiasm are sure to be moved. Rossini is always amusing; Mozart never. The music of the latter is like a grave and pensive mistress, who steals away the heart more effectually on account of this very pensiveness: a woman of this character either fails at once of her effect, and is set down for a prude, or makes a profound impression, that seizes upon the soul at once and for ever.

In Italy, as every where else, there is a certain class of amateurs, who never venture to utter an opinion of their own, but are content to be the echoes of the voice of fashion or caprice; they never speak from themselves, but always modestly and respectfully repeat the sentiments of others. These good people have been amused by Rossini, — they have applauded, with transport, his "Pietra del Paragone," and the "Italiana in Algeri;" they have been touched by the duet in "Bianca e Faliero they say that Rossini has imparted new life to the opera seria; but, in their hearts, they regard him as a brilliant heresiarch. They consider him in the same light as Pietro di Cortona, a painter of great effect, who dazzled Italy for some time by the brilliancy of his colouring, so that, after looking at one of his pictures, Raphael himself seemed tame. Raphael has many of the softer qualities, and the modest perfections, that characterise Mozart. Nothing makes less pretensions, in the whole range of painting, than the modest air and celestial purity of one of the Madonnas of the painter of Urbino, with her eyes fixed in downcast tenderness upon the smiling bambino (child). If the picture were not called a Raphael, the crowd of vulgar amateurs would coldly pass it by, without deigning to cast a look upon a thing so simple, and which, to common souls, is a thing so common.

It is precisely the same with the duet, "La ci darem la mano." If this air were not known to be by Mozart, the greater part of our musical dandies would call it dull and heavy in the extreme: on the contrary, they are electrified by Rossini's air in the "Barbiere,"—"Io sono docile." What matters it that this air, by being misplaced, is contradictory to common sense? What have they to do with common sense?

The great difference between the music of Mozart and that of Rossini is, that they are scarcely ever addressed to the same persons. Mozart may apply to his brilliant rival (if rival he can be called,) the words of the niece to her aunt, in Dumoustier's comedy of "Les Femmes,'

The people of taste, of whom I spoke above, declare that, if Rossini has not the same comic vein, and the same richness of ideas, as Cimarosa, at least, he has the advantage of the Neapolitan in vivacity and rapidity of style. They find him for ever syncoping those phrases which Cimarosa always takes care to develop, even to their last consequences. If Rossini never composed an air so comic as “Amicone del mio core,” Cimarosa never wrote an air so rapid as the duet in the “Barbiere,”—” Oggi arriva un regimento,” or that of Rosina and Figaro, in the same opera. Now, Mozart has nothing of all this, — nothing light, nothing rapid, nothing comic; he is the very opposite, not only to Rossini, but almost to Cimarosa himself. Would he have composed that air of the “Orazj,”—” Quelle pupille tenere,” without throwing into it a deep shade of melancholy? The more we are charmed with the music of Rossini and Cimarosa, and the more we become familiarised to it, the more we are disposed to enjoy the music of Mozart, — the more we are saturated with the gay measures and little notes of Rossini, — the greater the pleasure with which we shall return to the large notes and slow movements of the author of the “Cosi fan tutte.”

Mozart, I believe, was never gay more than two or three times in his life; much about the same number of times that Rossini has been melancholy. The latter has composed an opera in which a young soldier sees the mistress of his heart condemned to death under his own eyes, and led away to punishment; and yet there is nothing sombre in the “Gazza Ladra.” In the sad story of “Otello,” there is nothing melancholy but the duet of Desdemona and her attendant, the prayer, and the romance. But then I might cite the quartetto in “Bianca e Faliero,” the duet of “Armida,” and even the splendid instrumental movement, at the moment that Renaud, agitated by a thousand passions, retires from the scene, and returns again: all these are perfectly expressive of Italian love, — of a passion that is sombre and impetuous, but which has no melancholy in it. In a word, there is scarcely any thing in common between the chefs-d’œuvres of Rossini,—” La Pietra del Paragone”L’ltaliana in Algeri,” “Tancredi,” “Otello — and the operas of Mozart. The resemblance, (if resemblance there be, and which at best goes no further than the style,) took place at a later period. It was only in the “Gazza Ladra” and the “Mosè,” that Rossini first began to imitate the strong manner of the German school.

Rossini has never written any thing so full of feeling as the duet, “Crudel perche finora,” of Mozart; nor any thing so truly comic as “Mentr’io ero un mascalzone,” or the duet in the “Nemici generosi,” of Cimarosa. But neither Mozart nor Cimarosa has ever composed any thing so light and animated as the duet, “D’un bel uso di Turchia, in the “Turco in Italia which, it appears to me, is the method that should be pursued, in order to form a just estimate of the different style and character of these three great masters, who, followed by a crowd of imitators, occupy at present the musical scene of Europe.

CHAPTER I.

Rossini's family — Born at Pesaro, 1792 — Studies music under Angelo Tesei — Goes on his musical tour — Composes a Cantata, in 1808, and the Operas of "Demetrio e Polibio," in 1809; "La Cambiale di matrimonio," 1810; L'Equivoco Stravagante," in 1811; "L'Inganno Felice," in 1812; "Ciro in Babalonia," an Oratorio; "La Scala di Seta;" "L'Occasione fa il Ladro;" "Il Figlio per Azzardo" all in the same year, and "Tancredi," in 1813 — Rossini accepts an engagement at Venice.

Gioacchino Rossini was born on the 29th of February, 1792, at Pesaro, a pretty little town in the Papal states, situated on the gulf of Venice. His father was an inferior performer on the French horn, of the third class, in one of those strolling companies of musicians, who, to gain a livelihood, attend the fairs of Sinigaglia, Fermo, Forli, and other small towns of Romagna, or its vicinity. The little musical resources, in which the company is deficient, are collected in the neighbourhood where they pitch their tent; an orchestra is collected impromptu, and the good folks of the fair are treated with an opera. His mother, who passed for one of the prettiest women of Romagna, was a seconda donna of very passable talents. They went from town to town, and from company to company; the husband playing in the orchestra, and his wife singing on the stage. Poverty was of course the companion of their wanderings; and their son Rossini, covered with glory, and with a name that resounded from one end of Europe to the other, faithful to his paternal poverty, had not, before his arrival two years ago at Vienna, for his whole capital, a sum equal to the annual pay of an actress on the stage of Paris or Lisbon. Living is cheap at Pesaro; and, although this family subsisted on the most precarious means in the world, they never lost their natural gaiety, and strictly adhered to the maxim of taking no heed for the future.

The political state of that part of Italy in which Rossini was born, is but little to be envied. All the Papal government requires from its subjects is the regular payment of taxes, and a strict attendance on mass. Its subjects, on the

other hand, require from the Papal government free will in every thing else; and, on the strength of this compact, all the tastes, propensities, and passions of man flourish and luxuriate in a fearless vigour, that would astonish the governments of France and England. Man may do what he will, or be what he will, in that land of sensibility. This, it is true, fills the roads with banditti; but it crowds the convents with monks: it fills her palaces with impurity; but it never leaves the Cassinos destitute of beauty: it fills the streets with mendicants; but it sends hosts of amateurs upon the stage.

Music has irresistible charms for the Italian; a guitar and a voice will carry him from Tarento to Domo d'Ossola, — through Italy, and through life. Italy has been happily termed — the land of love and of the dolce far niente. Sunshine costs nothing; and no man can contrive so well to dispense with clothes as the Italian. He can be luxurious, when luxury is before him; he can fast when he has nothing else to do No living being can exist upon so little as he; he can live upon an onion, water, air. He "diets of the cameleon's dish," and, nestling by the side of his mule on the Appennine, or on a litter of straw in the valleys of Piedmont, he dreams of the pence and plaudits of the Boulevards, or the golden showers of the Haymarket.

Rossini's portion from his father, was the true native heirship of an Italian: a little music, a little religion, and a volume of Ariosto. The rest of his education was consigned to the legitimate school of southern youth, the society of his mother, the young singing girls of the company, those prima donnas in embryo, and the gossips of every village through which they passed. This was aided and refined by the musical barber and news-loving coffee-house keeper of the Papal village.

In 1799, the parents of Rossini took him from Pesaro to Bologna, but he did not begin to study music till 1812, when he was twelve years of age. His first master was D. Angelo Tesei. In the course of a few months, the young Gioacchino already earned some paoli by singing in the churches. His pleasing soprano voice, and the vivacity of his youthful manners, gained him many friends among the priests who directed the Funzioni. Under Professor Angelo Tesei, Gioacchino became a tolerable proficient in singing, in the art of accompanying, and in the rules of counterpoint. In 1806, he was capable of singing at first sight any piece of music put before him, and great hopes

were conceived of his future excellence; it was augured from his growth and the quality of his voice, that he would make an excellent tenor.

On the 27th of August, 1806, he quitted Bologna to make the musical tour of Romagna. He took his place at the piano, as director of the orchestra at Lugo, Ferrara, Forli, Sinigaglia, and other little towns. It was only in 1807, that the young Rossini gave up singing in the church. The 20th of March, in the same year, he entered the Lyceum of Bologna, and received lessons in music from Padre Stanislao Mattel.

A year after, (the 11th of August, 1808,) he had made so considerable a progress, as to be qualified to compose a symphony, and a cantata, entitled "Il Pianto d'Armonia" This was his first essay in vocal music. Immediately after this, he was chosen director of the Academy of the Concordi, a musical society at that time existing in the bosom of the Lyceum at Bologna.

"Demetrio et Polibio" is the first opera composed by Rossini. It is said to have been written in 1809, but it was not performed till 1812, in the theatre Valle, at Rome. Some have imagined that it was re-written by the master for this representation; but there is no proof of the fact. Rossini's known indolence, and the active duties he was obliged to perform this year, would rather tell against such -a supposition.

Such was the progress Rossini had made at nineteen, that he was chosen to direct, as head of the orchestra, the "Four Seasons" of Haydn, which were executed at Bologna; the "Creadon," which was given on the same occasion, (May 1811), was directed by the celebrated Soprano Marchesi. When the parents of Rossini had no engagement, they returned to their residence at Pesaro. Some rich amateurs of this town, I believe of the family Perticari, took the young Rossini under their protection. A young lady, of considerable beauty and fortune, formed the happy idea of sending him to Venice; he there composed, for the theatre San-Mose, a little opera in one act, entitled "La Cambiale di Matrimonio" (1810). This was the first opera of Rossini performed upon the stage. After a success very flattering to a beginner, he returned to Bologna; and, in the autumn of the following year (1811), produced "L'Equivoco Stravagante." The following year he returned to Venice, and composed for the carnival, "L'Inganno Felice In this piece genius shines forth in every part. An experienced eye will at once recognize

in this opera, in one act, the parent ideas of fifteen or twenty capital pieces, which at a latter period contributed to decide the fortune of the chefs-d'œuvres of Rossini. It contains a beautiful terzetto, between the peasant Tarabetto, the lord of the domain, and the wife, who has been exiled by her deluded husband.

The "Inganno felice" resembles the first pictures of Raphael, which he painted in the school of Perrugino, and which display all the faults and all the timidity of early youth. Rossini, not venturing to assume the master at twenty, was fearful as yet to attempt to please himself only. The great artist is composed of two elements: of a soul tender, impassioned, fastidious., and demanding much; and of a talent that makes every effort to please this soul, and to delight it by the creation of new beauties.

The same year, the patrons of Rossini procured him an engagement at Ferrara; and, during the last season, he composed an oratorio, intitled "Ciro in Babilonia," a work containing many beauties, but considered by critics as inferior in energy to the "Inganno felice." After this Rossini was again summoned to Venice; but the Impressario (director) of San-Mose, not content with gaining, for a few sequini, the talents of a pleasing composer, who was patronized by the ladies, and whose rising genius was destined to bring new honours to his theatre, thought that, as he was poor, he might treat him cavalierly with impunity. Rossini at once gave a proof of that originality of character, by which he has been always distinguished.

In quality of composer, Rossini's power over the orchestra was absolute, and he could oblige them to execute whatever he composed. In the new opera, therefore, of "La Scala di Seta," which he made for the insolent impressario, he brought together an assemblage of all the extravagances and whimsical combinations, in which, it may well be supposed, a head like his is sufficiently fertile. For instance, in the allegro of the overture, the violins were made to break off at the end of every bar, in order to give a rap with the bow, upon the tin shades of the candlesticks. It would be difficult to imagine the astonishment and indignation of an immense concourse of people, assembled from every quarter of Venice, and even from the Terra Firma, to hear the new Opera of the young Maestro. This public, who, during the greater part of the afternoon, had besieged the doors; who had been forced to wait whole hours in the passages, and at last to endure the "tugof war" at the

opening of the doors, thought themselves personally insulted, and hissed with all the vengeance of an enraged Italian public. Rossini, not in the least moved by all this uproar, coolly asked the trembling impressario, with a smile, what he had gained by treating him so cavalierly. He then quitted the theatre, and started at once for Milan, where his friends had procured him an engagement. However, a month after, he made his peace with the humbled manager; and, returning to Venice, successively produced two farze (operas in one act,) at the theatre San-Mosè, "L'Occasione fa il Ladro" (1812), and "Il Figlio per azzardo," (in the Carnival of 1813.) It was also during this Carnival, that Rossini composed his "Tancrcdi."

No adequate idea can be formed of the success which this delightful Opera obtained at Venice, — the city which, of all others, is considered as most critical in its judgments, and whose opinions, as to the merits of a composition, are supposed to hold the greatest weight. Suffice it to say, that the presence of Napoleon himself, who honoured the Venetians with a visit, was unable to call off their attention from Rossini. All was enthusiasm! tutto furore, to use the terms of that expressive language, which seems to have been created for the use of the arts. From the gondolier to the patrician, every body was repeating

"Mi rivedrai, ti revedrô."

In the very courts of law, the judges were obliged to impose silence on the auditory, who were ceaselessly humming

"Ti revedro,"

Of this we have been credibly informed by many persons who were witnesses of the singular fact.

"Our Cimarosa is returned to life again," was the expression when two dilettanti met in the streets. Nay, it was even something better; he inspired

fresh delight, he produced new effects. Before Rossini came, there had always been a considerable portion of languor and tediousness in the opera seria; the choice pieces were sparingly sown; they were frequently found separated from each other, by fifteen or twenty minutes of recitation and ennui. Rossini, by his life, his fire, his vivacity, had carried the opera buffa to its utmost degree of perfection.

It cannot be denied, that the true opera buffa, — the libretti for which were composed, in the Neapolitan dialect, by Tita di Lorenzi, — had been carried to the very acme of perfection, by Paisiello, Cimarosa, and Fioravanti. It would be folly to require more fire, genius, and life, than what animate their compositions: there is no work of art in which nearer approaches have been made to the finished and the perfect. The success of Rossini has arisen, in a great measure, from the art with which he has known how to transfer a portion of the spirit and fire of the opera buffa, to that of the mezzo caratere, as in the “Barbiere di Seviglia,” the “Tancredi,” &c.

The real opera buffa is almost unknown beyond the limits of Naples; great as is the progress that instrumental music has made, since the days of Fioravanti and Paisiello, it would be found difficult to add one more note, either of the oboë or bassoon, to their chefs-d’œuvre, without injuring the general effect: Rossini, therefore, has shewn his judgment, in not treading on this ground; he has been content with the more feasible task of throwing life and energy into the opera seria.

CHAPTER II.

Rossini at Venice—" Il Tancredi" — Anecdote relative to the air "Di tanti palpiti" — Rossini and the Prima Donna.

The delightful Opera of "Tancredi" made the tour of Europe, in the short space of four years. It holds so high a place among the efforts of Rossini's genius, as to demand a particular notice. The first bars of the overture are not deficient of a certain grace and nobleness, but it is not till the allegro movement, that the talent of the composer begins fully to display itself. It possesses a character of novelty, and a daring attempt at originality, that, on the first night of its representation at Venice, captivated every heart. This was a fortunate omen for the composer. The national honour of the Venetians was still alive to the insult that had been offered them by the obligato accompaniment of the tin-candlesticks. Rossini was conscious of this, and would not venture to take his place at the piano, according to custom, and to the terms of his engagement. He anticipated the storm that awaited him, and had concealed himself under the stage, in the passage leading to the orchestra. After waiting for him in vain, the first violin, finding the moment of performance draw nigh, and that the public began to manifest signs of impatience, determined to commence the Opera.

This first allegro pleased so much, that during the applauses and repeated bravos, Rossini crept from his hiding-place, and slipped into his seat at the piano.

The overture finished, the curtain rises, and we see a chorus of Syracusian knights, who sing, "Paci onore...fede, amore." This chorus is very pleasing, but is this the character suited to such a situation? Is it not defective in that force, which is so conspicuous in every part of the works of Haydn? The consequence is, that in spite of its agreeable character, this Introduzione produces but little effect. If the idea of correcting, and especially of correcting any thing that pleases him, were not the farthest thing in the world

from the character of Rossini, he would have devoted some minutes to this chorus of Syracusian knights.

The cavatina of Ameniade, “Come dolce all’ alma mia,” wants the melancholy that Mozart would have thrown into it, and some of the ornaments are too pretty not to be out of their place. A maiden of a somewhat exalted soul, musing upon her absent lover, and that lover proscribed and banished, ought surely to speak the language of sadness. Rossini was perhaps too young to feel the force of this truth, or he was fearful, in attempting melancholy music, to become tedious. At a more advanced age he would have imitated Mozart; at eighteen he wrote what his genius dictated, and that genius, if possessed of any tenderness at all, seems defective in that kind, at least, which is accompanied by melancholy.

At length we came to the celebrated entrata of Tancred. A theatre like some of those in Italy is necessary, in order that the landing of the knight and his suite on a lone and solitary spot should produce a certain nobleness of effect. On a stage of the dimensions of our own, where Tancred has to step from his ricketty bark within some dozen paces of the audience, it cannot but have an air of the ridiculous. At Milan, the illusion of distance, and of admirably managed machinery, produces an entirely different effect on the imagination. The history of this scena is curious; Rossini, in the first instance, had composed a grand air for the entrance of Tancred; but it did not please the Signora Malanote and she refused to sing it. What was still more mortifying, she did not make known this unwillingness till the very evening before the first representation of the piece. Malanote was a first-rate singer, she was in the flower of youth and beauty, and the gallantry of the young composer was obliged to give way to this no-unusual sally of caprice. At first his despair was extreme: “If after the occurrence in my last opera, “exclaimed Rossini,”

“the first entrance of Tancred should be hissed — tutta l’Opera va a terra.” The poor young man returned pensive to his lodgings. An idea came into his head; he seizes his pen and scribbles down some few lines; it is the famous “Tu che accendi,” — that which, of all airs in the world, has perhaps been sung the oftenest, and in the greatest number of places. The story goes, at Venice, that the first idea of this delicious cantilena, so expressive of the joy of revisiting one’s native shore after long years of absence, is taken from a

Greek litany, which Rossini had heard, some days previous, chaunted at vespers, in a church on one of the islets of the Laguna near Venice.

At Venice it is called the aria dei rizi (air of rice); the reason is this: in Lombardy, every dinner, from that of the gran signore to that of the piccolo maestro, invariably begins with a plate of rice; and, as they do not like their rice over done, it is an indispensable rule for the cook to come a few minutes before dinner is served up, with the important question, — bisogna mettere i rizi? (shall the rice be put down?) At the moment Rossini came home in a state of desperation, his servant put the usual question to him; the rice was put on the fire, and, before it was ready, Rossini had furnished his celebrated "Di tanti palpiti."

On the arrival of Tancred we have an example in the orchestra of the truly sublime of dramatic harmony. This does not consist, as the Germans maintain, in the art of expressing the sentiments of the personage on the scene, by means of clarinets, violoncellos, and oboés; it consists in the rarer art of making the instruments express those sentiments which the personage himself is unable, for some cause or other, to utter. On arriving at this desert spot, Tancred paints in a single word what is passing in his soul. After this a moment of silence is necessary, to allow him to contemplate that ungrateful land, which he beholds again with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain. Were the hero to continue talking on without interruption, he would destroy a considerable part of the interest we feel for him, and would contradict the idea we naturally form of his deep emotions on revisiting the spot which is inhabited by Amenaide. Tancred ought to brood over his sorrows for some moments in silence; but, in the mean time, the sighs of the horn paint the emotions of his soul, and perhaps certain shades of feelings, to which language could very inadequately give utterance.

This is what music was not made to accomplish in the days of Pergolese and Sacchini, and which is still neglected or disregarded by composers of the German school. They make the instruments speak out every thing roundly, not only what they ought to tell us, but also what the personage himself ought to utter in his song. Instruments, like the varieties of the human voice, have their distinct characters: thus, for instance, during the air and recitative of Tancred, Rossini has employed the flute, and nothing could have been more judicious; this instrument has the peculiar power of painting the

mingled emotions of grief and joy, and such are the feelings that swell the heart of Tancred, on beholding that ungrateful country which he is condemned to visit only in disguise.

If we were to consider harmony under another point of view, in as far as regards its relation to song, it might be remarked that Rossini has employed the same art that distinguishes the writings of Sir Walter Scott, and which, if we mistake not, has ensured such extraordinary success to the author of "Old Mortality." As this author prepares and sustains his dialogues and recitals by highly coloured descriptions, so does Rossini his song by high-wrought harmonies. In illustration of my idea, see the opening scene in "Marmion," and in particular the first pages of "Ivanhoe," which present us with that admirable description of the setting sun, darting its last horizontal rays through the low and tufted branches of the trees that conceal the habitation of Cedric the Saxon. The pale rays fall upon the singular attire of the fool Wamba, and Gurth the swine-herd. Little as these two personages seem suited to the heroic, yet, by being thus connected with this opening description, we feel a certain degree of interest in them and are anxious to know what they have to impart; and when at last they do speak, their least words possess a more than common interest. Suppose the romance to have opened with this dialogue, unprepared by any description, and it would be found to have lost nearly the whole of its effect.

It is thus that men of genius employ harmony in music, in the very manner that Sir W. Scott has done description in these instances; others, not excepting the learned M. Cherubini, heap up their harmonies one upon the other, in the same manner as Delille has done his descriptions, in his poem "Là Pitié." How different from this Sir W. Scott, who by a happy interchange of dialogue and description, gives a keener relish for each. Such descriptions, when judiciously employed, have a wonderful efficacy in soothing the soul, and in giving it that tone, which allows the simplest dialogue to produce its full effect, and the same observations may equally apply to harmony when employed with taste and judgment. In the days of Pergolese, such descriptions were unknown; Mozart was the Walter Scott of music. He employed description in the most effective and enchanting manner; sometimes, though rarely, he carried it to excess. Mayer, Winter, and Weigl, like the Abbe Dellile, are lavish of their descriptions: learned it

must be allowed, correct in grammar and in the mechanical part of art, but cold and uninteresting. Rossini has em-

ployed them in a manner that has universally pleased; his colouring is lively, and his lights singularly picturesque; he always attracts the eye, but he sometimes fatigues it. In his "Gazza Ladra," for instance, we would fain a hundred times silence the orchestra, in order to be gratified by more song. Rossini had not given into these faults, when he wrote his "Tancredi;" he then preserved the happy mean between abundance and profusion; he knew how to adorn beauty, without concealing it, without taking from its effect, without overloading it with vain ornaments. Its songs are, if I may be allowed the expression, garnished with singular, new, and unexpected accompaniments, which always enliven the ear, and give a poignant effect to things in appearance the most common; and yet, while these accompaniments produce such powerful effects, they never interfere with the ease and freedom of the voice; or, to use the more happy expression of a celebrated critic, "Fanno coll canto conversazione rispetosa:" they never exceed the bounds of a respectful conversation in regard to song; they take care to be silent when the song appears to have something to say: in the German music, on the contrary, the accompaniments are, frequently, loud and insolent.

"There are faults in the first finale of 'Tancredi,' said a critic one evening at Brescia; "there are leaps from one note to another, that astonish the ear." — The reply was: "And is it absolutely necessary that the ear should never be astonished? If you wish to make discoveries at sea, you must encounter dangers and dash into unknown latitudes. If it were never permitted to astonish the ear, would the wild and singular Beethoven have succeeded after the noble and judicious Haydn?"

The duet "Ah! se de' mali miei," which commences by the profound melancholy of the hero, and finishes by a burst of triumphant courage, is of a very striking character. During the last movement, the trumpets are employed with an address worthy of the most consummate master. Rossini at eighteen divined by instinct what others can with difficulty comprehend after a whole life spent in long and laborious study. The movement "Il vivo lampo," at the moment Tancred draws his sword, is considered as one of the happiest things Rossini ever composed. And here I would give a hint to

singers to be sparing of their roulades in these bursts of violent passion; as in this sentiment of Tancred, “Odiarla, oh ciel! non so.” What more inconsistent than that a person in the transports of passion, should be studious of elegance, or, in other words, should have the cool leisure to consider what others may think of him. The man under the influence of violent emotions can only be supposed to preserve that degree of involuntary elegance which, with him, has become a habit. Such roulades, on the contrary, may be well displayed on such words as “Di quella spada,” for the very reverse of the reasons just stated.

It is impossible to quit the subject without saying one word of the chorus of knights when in search of Tancred,—”Régna il terror.” It is a model of the beautiful in its kind. It is the perfection of the union of the melody of the Italian, with the harmony of the German, school. Thus far, and no farther, should the revolution be allowed to proceed, which is hurrying us back into complicated, harmony.

How much good may arise from a simple cause! The offence given to the Venetian public by an accompaniment of tin-candle-sticks, proved the means of awakening all Rossini’s energies, to efface this unfavourable impression by an effort of art. He was therefore careful to avoid those common places of melody and harmony that abound in the scores of the greater part of his rivals. Scarcely a single instance will be found of those hacknied phrases of harmony, which form the corps de reserve of the German composers; and which, of late years, Rossini has but too lavishly employed in such of his operas as are cast in the German mould, for instance — Il Mosé, Otello, La Gazza Ladra, Ermione, & c.

It may well be supposed, that in such a place as Venice, Rossini was not less happy as a man, than celebrated as a composer. The fame of his reputation, aided by the agreeableness of his manners, won him the heart of the charming cantatrice buffa, the Signora Marcolini, then in the flower of her beauty, and her talents. Her charms were all-powerful, and she succeeded in estranging his affections from his former fair patrons. The world declared he was a most ungrateful man; and the chronicles of those days report that abundant were the reproaches uttered, and the tears shed, on this heart-rending occasion. Many anecdotes are afloat respecting this subject, singularly illustrative of the gaiety, recklessness, and inconstancy of

Rossini’s character. As a proof of Marcolini’s devotedness, it has been confidently asserted that, in order to gain this son of renown — this vanquisher of hearts, she actually sacrificed the illustrious author of the Epic of Charlemagne.

It was for Marcolini, — it was for her delicious contr’alto voice, and admirable comic powers, that he composed the gay and animated part of the Italiafia in Algeri, which we saw so sadly disfigured in a northern capital. We spare the name of the actress, in consideration of her being a pretty woman; but we must declare that she betrayed the character committed to her hands. And may not her prudery have been carried too far? Is there any thing so very alarming in the character of a young woman of the South, — gay, giddy, and full of the passions of her clime? Well; be it so! only let us beware, in our fear of giving offence to the gravity of the age, not to incur the charge of affectation or hypocrisy.

CHAPTER III.

Rossini at Venice, continued — L'ltaliana in Algeri — Political allusions — Anecdote of Rossini's Indolence.

In speaking of the "Italiana," we shall, of course, be understood as referring not to that opera, which appeared among us divested of half its spirit, but to that which really came from the pen of Rossini, and such as it was performed in Italy, where it at once placed the youthful composer in the first rank of maestri.

The reflected tints of the rainbow are not more delicate and more evanescent than the effects of music, inasmuch as all the charm depends upon the imagination. An association of disagreeable ideas, though involuntary, may tend to destroy for ever the effect of a masterpiece. Such was the case with us, with respect to the "Italiana the impression produced by its mediocre performance will not easily be effaced; indeed, had it not been for the spirit, vivacity, and admirable acting, of Ambrogetti, it would, in all probability, have been a complete failure. This having been the case, all those who should go and witness its revival, would go with an idea of seeing something mediocre. Such a prejudice would almost prove fatal to the finest music in the world.

The overture of the "Italiana" is delicious, but perhaps gay even to a fault. The introduction is admirable; the air, "Ah! lo sposo or piu non m'ama," is highly expressive of the grief of an innocent woman who has been deserted; it is full of profound feeling, without digressing into the tragic.

The cavatina of Lindor, "Languir per una bella," has a freshness about it that is delightful. The effect is in the highest degree imposing, though the music is simple: upon the whole, it is considered one of the prettiest things Rossini ever composed for a tenor voice.

The duet between Lindor and Mustapha, “Se inclinesse prender moglie,” is scarcely less agreeable than the former, but it has a deeper shade of the dramatic and the serious. It has been objected to the music of Rossini, that it has too much levity, and too little passion. It might be answered that, in the true opera buffa, the bursts of passion must be rare; and as if introduced to form an occasional relief to the general gaiety. It is thus, that the effect of a trait of tenderness comes with irresistible force upon the heart, from the effect of contrast, and perhaps from its being unexpected.

In the second part of this duet, “Caro amico, non c’e scampo,” Rossini has given one of the first examples of his greatest musical defect. The song of Mustapha is that of a clarinet; it consists entirely of batteries, whose only purpose is to set off to more advantage the delicious cantilena entrusted to the tenor. Cimarosa would not have acted thus. He had the happy art of giving such interest to these second parts that, if the ear should happen to be diverted from the first, it might find a due degree of pleasure in the second. Were this the case in the present instance, the part executed by Mustapha, would be found meagre, insignificant, and unnatural.

The air of Isabella, “Cruda sorte, amor tiranno,” is weak and without genius. But, to make good this defect, we are presented immediately after with the famous duet, “Ai capricci della sorte:” this contains an ease, grace, and elegance, of which few examples are to be found, even in Cimarosa himself.

The cantilena, “Maltrattata dalla sorte,” is a chef-d’œuvre of coquetry; it may be said to be the first instance where this trait of character has been represented in Italy in its true colours. Cimarosa is too apt to put the accents of real love into the mouths of his coquets. It may be said that, in describing the heart of woman, perhaps, this is the only fault with which this great man can be reproached. It was necessary that the present air of Isabella, should possess sufficient love to deceive the dupe, together with sufficient sprightliness to amuse the public.

The finale of the first act has been severely criticised; but the criticism has, in general, been rather directed towards the words than the music.

It is true that the Bey declares;

“Come scoppio di cannone

La mia testa fa bumbù!”

and that Taddeo exclaims:

“Sono come una cornacchia

Che spennata fa crà, crà!”

— and that in place of this we might have had eight or ten delicious verses of Marmontel or M. Etienne; but we might also have had them accompanied by the music of a Dalayrac or a Moudonville; and surely that would not have mended the matter. To suffer our minds to be called off from the gay and enlivening music of Rossini, to attend to some absurdity in the words of the libretto, is like looking to see if Teniers has painted his humorous sketch upon the best kind of canvass, of eighteen-pence the yard.

Apropos, as to the libretto; in general these things are so dull and so vapid, that I would advise the amateur merely to attend to the situation the poet has described — just to take the first word as a kind of clue to the sentiment, and then fill up the rest from the music. Not but that it would be all the better if we could have a libretto from the pen of a Goldoni or a Beaumarchais; it would give an additional charm to the music, and we might peruse it without destroying the charm of the scene before us. But, as Goldoni’s are rare now a-days, it is a lucky circumstance that the charming art which engages our attention can make us so readily pardon the absence of good poetry. I observed at Vicenza, that they ran it over the first evening, to form a general idea of the action; they skimmed over the heads of the airs and recitative, just to observe the nature of the passion, or the shade of sentiment which the music was to describe. Never, during the next forty representations, did it ever come into any one’s head to open the little volume with the blue cover.

Apprehensive of the disagreeable effect of the said libretto, Madame B — , of Venice, would never suffer it to be brought into her box, not even on the

first representation. She caused a summary of the action to be drawn out on a sheet of paper, and afterwards Nos. 1,2, 3, 4, &c marked out the subjects of each air, duet, or connected piece; for example — Jealousy of Ser Taddeo — Passionate love of Lindor — Coquetry of Isabella with the Bey, &c. I observed that every one found this very convenient.

The air of Isabella, in the second act, ought to be of a more coquettish character; on this occasion Rossini has not been so happy as in the duet described above. The elegant and redoubted roulades of Isabella leave the imagination of the spectator cold and unmoved. The ground of the stuff is poor, and one is forced to observe, whether one will or not, that these ornaments are employed to conceal poverty, and not to heighten the magnificence of the effect.

Nothing can be more gay and captivating than the conclusion of the terzetto, “Fragli amori e le belezze;” and the little delicate and tender trait, “Se mai torno a miei paesi,” which is thrown in, as if by accident, amidst the giddy whirl of this comic scene, produces an admirable effect from the force of contrast.

I should not hesitate to declare that the concluding scene of this opera is an historical monument. What! I shall be asked, an historical monument in the finale of an opera buffa? Yes, contrary as it may be to all rules, such is the case.

“Pensa alla patria, e intrepido

Il tuo dovere adempi;

Pensa che vide Italia Risplendere gli esempi

D’ardire e di valor.”

At the moment of the composition of these words a new and happier era had begun to dawn upon Italy: patriotism, that for more than three centuries had

been banished from her soil, began to revive again. Rossini could read this feeling in the souls of his audience, and knew how to enkindle it to enthusiasm. But, no sooner has he awakened these reveries, and inspired such lofty sentiments, by the beautiful and affecting melody of this passage, than he at once calls off their attention by the “Sciocco, tu ridi ancora?” The baseness of a certain party, who protested against the revival of these generous and awakening sentiments, and laughed at the idea of regenerating Italy, was held up to scorn in the “Vanne! mi fai dispetto,” which was always followed by a tumult of applause.

The expression given to the words “Rivedrem le patrie arene,” is in the highest degree soothing and tender. The love of country is here so warmly expressed as almost to assume the character of another and more ardent passion.

In Venice, in particular, — in that city which had enjoyed its era of freedom later than many others, — the appearance of the “ Italiana” was hailed with an enthusiasm of which it would be difficult to give the reader any adequate idea. Of all the cities of Italy, this is also the most gay and the most free from the besetting sin of pedantry. Such people could not fail to be pleased with a music that possesses so much more of spirit and gaiety than of depth and passion. Never was an opera more adapted to the character of a people than this, and therefore to this day it continues to be a favourite.

Such was the run that this new piece obtained, that Rossini had leisure to indulge for some time in his natural indolence, for indolent he was to excess. This the following anecdote will serve to prove.

During his residence in Venice this year, (1813) he lodged in a little room at one of the small inns. When the weather was cold he used to lie and write his music in bed, in order to save the expense of firing. On one of these occasions, a duet, which he had just finished for a new opera, “Il Figlio per Azzardo,” slipped from the bed, and fell on the floor. Rossini peeped for it in vain from under the bed clothes, it had fallen under the bed. After many a painful effort, he crept from his snug place, and leaned over the side of the bed to look for it. He sees it, but it lies beyond the reach of his arm; he makes one or two ineffectual efforts to reach it, he is half frozen with cold, and, wrapping himself up in the coverlid, exclaims, “Curse the duet, I will

write it over again; there will be nothing difficult in this, since I know it by heart." He began again, but not a single idea could he retrace; he fidgets about for some time, — he scrawls, — but not a note can he recall. Still his indolence will not let him get out of bed to reach the unfortunate paper. "Well!" he exclaims in a fit of impatience, "I will re-write the whole duet. Let such composers as are rich enough keep fires in their chambers. I cannot afford it. There let the confounded paper lie. It has fallen, and it would not be lucky to pick it up again."

He had scarcely finished the second duet when one of his friends entered. "Have the goodness to reach me the duet that lies under the bed." The friend poked it out with his cane, and gave it to Rossini. "Come," says the composer, snuggling close in his bed, "I will sing you these two duets, and do you tell me which pleases you best." The friend gave the preference to the first; the second was too rapid and too lively for the situation in which it was to stand. Another thought came into Rossini's head; he seized his pen, and without loss of time worked it up into a terzetto for the same opera. The person from whom I had this anecdote, assures me, that there was not the slightest resemblance between the two duets. The terzetto finished, Rossini dressed himself in haste, cursing the cold the whole time, and set off with his friend to the casino, to warm himself and take a cup of coffee. After this, he sent the lad of the casino with the duet and the terzetto to the copyist of "San Mosé," to be inserted in the score.

CHAPTER IV.

Rossini at Milan — La Pietra del Paragone — Anecdote of Marcolini — Rossini's Crescendo.

In the autumn of the same year (1812,) Rossini was engaged (scriturato) at Milan. The reader curious in theatrical history may perhaps wish to know the nature of this scritura. It consists of an agreement, usually printed on two pages, containing the reciprocal obligations on the part of the maestro, or singer, and on that of the impressario, or manager. Various are the intrigues set on foot in the engagement of first-rate talents, and singular the manoeuvres resorted to. I would recommend it to the attention of the traveller to examine into this kind of diplomacy; it will be found, if not more instructing, at least much more amusing than the other. In this art, as in that of painting, the customs of the country where it had its birth are mixed up with the theory of the art, and frequently tend to explain many of these processes. The genius of Rossini has been frequently influenced by the scritura whioh he has signed. On one occasion, it prevented him from accepting a handsome pension of 3000 fr offered him by a certain prince, who would not have forced him in spite of nature and his stars to write, but would have allowed him to wait for the favourable moment of inspiration, — a circumstance that would have given a new character to the productions of his genius. Other composers have had a year or more allowed them for the composition of an opera: Rossini, animated perhaps by the recollection of the prolific days of painting, has, like another Guido, been driven to the necessity of composing an opera in the course of a few weeks, in order to furnish the means of paying his landlord and his washer-woman. Perhaps one ought to apologize to delicate readers for entering into these homely details; but truth is truth, and a writer of biography should not sacrifice it to mere delicacy. The difficulty under these circumstances is to struggle against the humiliating feelings that such a state of things is apt to produce, and which too often prove hostile to the energies of the imagination. Happily for Rossini, such an effect was not produced upon his finer faculties; he

preserved all the vigour and freshness of his genius, under circumstances that might have depressed a less elastic spirit.

For the Scala, Rossini composed “La Pietra del Paragone.” He had now attained his twentieth year. His opera had the good fortune to be sustained by the talents of Signora Marcolini, Galli, Bonoldi, and Parlamagni, who were in the flower of their fame, and obtained a success for this piece, which was little short of extravagance.

“La Pietra del Paragone” (the Touchstone) is considered by some critics as the chef-d’œuvre of Rossini in the buffa style. As the story and situations of this piece are more interesting than these things usually are, and as the opera is unknown among us, a short analysis may not prove unacceptable.

The young Count Asdrubal comes into a large fortune, and is anxious to find some means, some touchstone, by which to try the hearts of the friends and mistress, who have come to him, together with his fortune. A man of vulgar mind would have felt happy in the midst of the flattery and caresses by which he was surrounded. Such is not the case with the Count Asdrubal; while every thing smiles around him, his heart is oppressed with unhappiness. He is in love with the Marchioness Clarice, a young widow, who with a party of friends is come to spend her villégiatura in his palace, situated in the midst of the forest of Viterbo. But an apprehension haunts the Count’s mind, that it may be his fortune only that has an attraction in the eyes of Clarice. The Count has an intimate friend, a young poet, who is free from vanity and affectation, but not free from love. Jocondo, such is the name of the young enthusiast, is also in love with the Marchioness, but he suspects that Asdrubal is preferred before him. Clarice, on her side, thinks that, if she betrays her passion to the Count, he may believe her actuated by interested motives, in the hopes of obtaining a large fortune.

Among the crowd of parisites and flatterers with which the chateau of the Count abounds, Don Marforio, a journalist of the country, stands prominent. He is an intriguing, cowardly, boasting fellow, but no fool, and his business is to make every body laugh, in concert with a certain Don Pacuvio, a desperate newsmonger, who has always some important secret to entrust to the world. Among the company at the chateau are two young ladies, distant relations of the Count, and who would have no objection to accept his hand.

For this purpose they have recourse to all the little contrivances usual on such occasions, and Don Marforio is their intimate friend and adviser.

At the rising of the curtain all these characters are brought into action in a manner at once lively and picturesque, in a splendid chorus: Don Pacuvio has a piece of news to communicate, of the last consequence to the friends of the Count, and to the two young ladies who seek the honour of his hand.

The newsmonger meets with a very poor reception from the company; and ends by getting into a furious passion, and putting his whole auditory to flight. He is pacified by the arrival of the young poet, Jocondo, and they sing a literary duet together, which, the world may well imagine, is not a whit more lively on that account. “I annihilate a thousand poets by a single colpo digiomale,” (blow of my journal,) says the man of gall: “But only make your court to me, and glory shall be the reward.”—” I would not purchase it at such a price!” cries the young poet, “what can there be in common between a journal and myself?” Upon the whole, this duetto is extremely poignant, and it required the talents of a Rossini to set it with due effect. It is admired for its levity, spirit, and the total absence of any thing like passion. The malignant journalist, finding Jocondo invulnerable on the side of vanity, leaves him with a sly hit at his unfortunate love for Clarice: “Greatness of soul is all very well,” says he, “but it rarely gains the day in competition with a few round thousands.” This melancholy truth appears to give the young poet no small uneasiness. On their departure, the amiable Clarice appears, and sings the well known cavatina, “Ecco pietosa, tu sei la sola!” which is almost as celebrated in Italy as the air of “Tancredi” itself.

We know what resources there are in music to paint hopeless love. In the present instance, there is a delicate shade in the feeling, — it is not a passion, opposed by the vulgar obstacle of a father or a guardian, but of a self-created fear of appearing mean and base in the eyes of the object of its affections.

She addresses her sorrows to the echoes of the grove:

“Ecco pietosa, tu sei la sola

Che mi consoli nell mio dolor.”

While Clarice is singing this, the Count, who happens to be behind a neighbouring thicket, imitates the echo. When Clarice says; Quel dirmi o Dio, non t’amo! the Count replies “T’amo.” The effect of this situation produces an illusion delightful in the extreme.

For an instant Clarice is happy, but the Count’s avowal of tenderness was but of a passing nature; she meets him a moment after, he is as gay and as amiable, but as coldly polite, as before. He is forming his grand plan; he is seen to give his last commands to his faithful steward, who is to second his views. The unfortunate passion of Jocondo for Clarice has not escaped his notice, and he is happy of an opportunity, in his supposed absence, of witnessing whether his friend will strive to conquer this passion. Finally the Count disappears, to return shortly after in the disguise of a Turk. Accompanied by a legal officer, the Turk comes and presents the steward, in the absence of his master, with a letter of exchange, in three valid forms, signed by the father of Count Asdrubal, the amount of which, two millions of franks, will absorb nearly the whole of the Count’s fortune. The steward does not fail to recognize as true and valid the signature of his master’s father, and all the world believes the Count a ruined man. At this moment commences one of the most masterly buffa finales that Rossini ever composed.

Sigillara (a seal) is the barbarous, half-Italian, word with which the Turk in disguise answers all the objections made to him.

He wishes to put seals to every thing and every place. This kind of cant word, which is repeated by the Turk on all occasions, and in every possible tone, made such an impression upon the good people of Milan, that they adopted it at once as the name of the piece. If you were to talk of “Pietra del Paragone” in Lombardy, nobody would understand you: you must say “Il Sigillara.”

The effect of the Sigillara finale was quite magical. People ran in crowds to Milan, from Parma, Piacenza, Bergamo, Brescia, and all the towns within

twenty leagues distance. Rossini was the first man of his age; nothing was in every mouth but Rossini; all the world ran to see him as a prodigy. Love was not tardy in hastening to recompense the musician who was such an enthusiastic in its praise. Dazzled by the glories that surrounded him, the prettiest, perhaps, of the pretty women of Lombardy fell desperately in love with him. Faithful heretofore to her duties, and cited as a pattern of young and prudent wives, she at once forgot her own reputation, abandoned her palace and her husband, and publicly stole away her favourite from the arms of Marcolini. Was not this a just vengeance upon the latter, for her having exerted the tyranny of her charms, at the expense of the former protectresses of Rossini?

“Infelix! te nunc fata impia tangunt.”

Rossini made his new devotee the first musician probably in all Italy; seated by her side at her piano-forte, and at her country-house at B —— he composed the greater part of those airs and cantilenas which afterwards made the fortune of his thirty operas.

Every thing at this period was peace and happiness in Lombardy. Milan, the brilliant Capital of a new kingdom, and where the tribute of folly exacted by the sovereign was less than that of the neighbouring states, saw all the means of making a fortune, and all the sources of pleasure and amusement, set in activity. It is with countries as with individuals, — it is not the being rich that produces happiness, but the becoming so. The new manners of Milan assumed a vigour unknown since the middle age. Count Prina was all activity in the field of politics, Appiani in that of painting, and Monti in that of poetry; and yet there was nothing like affectation, no prudery, no blind enthusiasm for Napoleon; they only gave him flattery in proportion as he paid for it in ready money.

The happiness that thus reigned in Lombardy had something still more interesting in it, because it was on the point of being again destroyed. I know not what vague presentiment made the Milanese already lend a boding ear to the sound of cannon that muttered in the north. At the very moment that “La Pietra del Paragone” was exciting such enthusiasm, the work of desolation was going on upon the banks of the Borysthenes.

Notwithstanding the natural indifference of Rossini, a feeling which he affects perhaps, but upon which he certainly prides himself too much, he cannot sometimes help speaking out in terms of enthusiasm, so rare with him, of this delightful epoch of his youth, when his happiness was blended with that of a whole people, who, after three hundred years of depression, had again launched forth into happiness.

The second act of "La Pietro del Paragone," opens with a quartetto, unique in the works of Rossini; it is most perfectly expressive of the tone and charm of an agreeable conversation, between persons of a lively and animated turn, who utter their sentiments without restraint.

This is followed by a comic duel between Don Marforio the journalist, who has had the insolence to speak of love to the Marchioness, and Jocondo, who, though he meets with no return of love, resolves to avenge the insult offered to her. The Journalist, being hard pushed by his antagonist, exclaims:

"Dirô ben di voi nel mio giornale."

"Potentissimi Dei! sarebbe questa

"Una ragione piu forte

"Per ammazzarti subito."

The quarrel becomes more complicated by the arrival of the Count, who threatens Marforio with vengeance for an article he has inserted in his journal, relative to his misfortunes. The grand terzetto which results from this situation, may bear a comparison with the celebrated duel in the "Nemici generosi" of Cimarosa.

The forced pleasantry of the cowardly journalist, who wishes to terminate the affair affably,

“Con quel che resta ucciso

Io poi mi battero,”

is delicious in music.

The song, “Ecco i soliti saluti,” which is sung while the two friends take their swords, which are brought by two lacqueys in full livery, on large plateaus of silver, and make their saluts according to the etiquette of fencing, is perfect. The ideas which it awakens are exactly of that degree of seriousness which is necessary to deceive a man of some wit, who is overcome with fear.

This terzetto, which would be delicious in any place, is, by circumstances, rendered doubly so in Italy, where they take a malicious pleasure in playing off their jokes ad hominem, against the official journalist, who, in spite of the high powers by whom he is protected, frequently experiences the same rough treatment which Scapin affects to treat with such contempt. At Milan its success was altogether extravagant; the actor who performed Don Marforio contrived to obtain a full suit of clothes, which was at once recognized to have been worn by the journalist, who wrote under the protection of the police.

This opera finishes with a grand air like the “Italiano in Algeri.” Nothing would do with Marcolini but she must appear in man’s clothes, and Rossini was obliged to arrange matters with the poet so as to allow Clarice to disguise herself as a captain of hussars, in order to contrive and draw from the Count an avowal of his love. Nobody in Milan, not even the journalist who had been made the subject of so much mirth, imagined there was any thing absurd in the circumstance of a young Roman lady, of the first distinction, disguising herself in the uniform of a captain of hussars, and coming to salute the public, sword in hand, at the head of her troop. Had Marcolini asked to sing on horseback, Rossini would have consented.

It was at Milan, that Rossini stole the idea of his crescendo, since so celebrated, from a composer of the name of Mosca, who flew into an

outrageous passion when he heard of the circumstance, and threatened vengeance against the thief:

Tantæne animis celestibus iræ?

CHAPTER V.

Rossini revisits Pesaro — Escapes the Conscription — Envy — Rossini and M. Berton — Rossini's Adventures at Bologna.

After obtaining such distinguished success at Milan, Rossini revisited Pesaro, and his family, to whom he is warmly attached. The only person with whom he has been known to correspond is his mother, and his letters to her are thus singularly addressed:

All' ornatissima Signora Rossini, Madre del célébré Maestro, In Bologna
Such is the character of a man, who, half in jest, half in earnest, scruples not to make an avowal of the glory that surrounds him, and laughs at the modest prudery of the academy. Deriving happiness from the effects produced by his genius, upon a people the most sensitive upon earth, and intoxicated with the voice of praise from his very cradle, he believes implicitly in his own celebrity, and cannot see why a man, gifted like Rossini, should not rank in the same degree as a general of division or a minister of state. They have gained a grand prize in the lottery of ambition, he has gained a grand prize in the lottery of nature. This is one of Rossini's own phrases; I heard it from his own lips, says his biographer, at a party given by Prince Ghigi at Rome, in 1819.

About the time of his journey to Pesaro, an attention was shewn him as honorable as it was rare, and which is equally creditable to the giver and the receiver: his genius proved the means of his exemption from the almost universal operation of the miserable conscription laws. The minister of the Interior ventured to propose to Prince Eugene, the Viceroy o f Italy, an exception in his favour. The Prince at first hesitated, through fear of a reprimand from head-quarters at Paris, the daily advices from which were most pressing and most rigorous upon this point; but he at length yielded to the decided feelings of the public.

After this narrow escape of being sent for a soldier, Rossini went to Bologna, where the same adventures awaited him as at Milan, — the enthusiasm of the public, and the more grateful meed of the smiles of beauty.

The rigorists of Bologna, so celebrated in Italy for the severity of their critical taste, and who exercise the same dictatorship over music, as the members of the French Academy did over the three unities, reproached him, and not without reason, with having sometimes transgressed against the rules of composition. Rossini did not deny the justice of the charge. “I should not have so many faults to reproach myself with,” was his reply, “if I had leisure to read my manuscript twice over; but you know very well, that scarcely six weeks are allowed me to compose an Opera. I take my pleasure during the first month; and, pray, when would you have me take my pleasure if not at my present age, and with my present success? Would you have me wait till I am grown old and full of spleen. At length the two last weeks arrive; I compose every morning a duo or air, which is to be rehearsed that very evening. How then would you have me detect little faults of grammar in the accompaniments, (l’instrumentazione)?” Notwithstanding the candour of this excuse, a great bustle was made in the musical circles of Bologna respecting those faults of grammar. This is the same complaint that the pedants of his time made against Voltaire, whom they accused of not knowing orthography. So much the worse for orthography, was the dry remark of Rivarol.

After listening as patiently as possible to the declamation of these pedants against Rossini for violating the rules of composition, a celebrated critic made this reply: “Pray, who laid down these rules? Were they made by persons superior in genius to the author of “Tancredi?” Does stupidity cease to be stupidity because sanctioned by antiquity, and the usages of the schools? Let us examine these pretended rules a little more closely: and, pray, what are we to say of rules that can be infringed without the public perceiving it, and without our pleasure being in the least diminished M. Berton, of the Institute, has renewed this dispute at Paris. The fact is, that the faults here complained of are scarcely perceptible while listening to the operas of Rossini. It is like objecting as a crime to Voltaire, that he does not employ the same phrases and terms of expression as La Bruyère and Montesquieu. The second of these great writers has this memorable

sentence: “A member of the French Academy writes as they write; a man of wit writes as he writes.”

The truth is, that a knot of composers, who found themselves crushed in a few months by the success of an idle reckless youth of twenty, were glad of a pretext for giving vent to their envy. When reproaches of this kind are kept up by a certain class, they are sure of producing a certain effect, and will not fail to be repeated as long as Rossini continues to be applauded. A mere technical exposition of the objections raised by these pedants would fill a dozen pages; and, as their introduction would only serve to weary the reader’s patience, I shall pass them over in silence, and confine my observations to M. Berton. In his work entitled “De la Musique méchanique et de la Musique philosophique,” he has hazarded the following remarks: “It does not appear that this Italian has made any advance beyond that music which is merely mechanical and in another place he attempts to prove that the author of Othello has made nothing but arabesques in music. These are daring assertions in the mouth of a man who is no obscure journalist, no second-rate composer, but a vigorous champion of the art, who has gained many laurels of triumph. The author of Montano, of Aline, and Délire, is a name upon which the anti-Rossinians may well pride themselves. At last the prejudices of the profession stand avowed in the person of one of its active disciples, and the counter-revolution in music has for its champion a member of the Institute. When my reader asks me what I have to oppose to so great a name, I shall merely recommend him to go to the Theatre Feydeau this evening to witness “Montano et Stephanie,” and to-morrow to the Italian Opera to hear “Tancredi.” Apparently M. Berton has not fallen into those faults of composition with which he so superciliously reproaches M. Rossini: well, all I ask of the reader is, to lay his hand on his heart, and honestly declare what is the difference between the two works?

Rossini is full of grammatical faults: well, be it so; and yet there is not a village in Italy which could not furnish a dozen of these critics upon notes, who, for a single sequin, would undertake to correct the errors in any one of Rossini’s operas. I have heard another objection started: the poor in spirit are scandalized at seeing that he does not turn his ideas to the best account. This is like the miser, who would give the name of fool to a rich and happy man who should throw down a guinea to a little peasant girl in exchange for a

nosegay. It is not given to all the world to know the pleasure of a little bit of thoughtless extravagance.

But it was at Bologna that poor Rossini was doomed to a more serious embarrassment than that of the mere outcry of pedants. His Milanese admirer abandoned her splendid palace, her husband, her children, and her fortune, and early one morning plunged, as if from the clouds, into the little chamber of his lodging, which was any thing but elegant. The first moments were all tenderness, but scarce had the transports of their meeting subsided, when the door opened, and in rushed one of the most celebrated and most beautiful women of Bologna, (the Princess C....). A scene ensued which the comic pencil of Gay has already anticipated in the Beggar's Opera. The reckless Rossini laughed at the rival queens; sung them, like another Macheath, one of his own buffa songs; and then made his escape, leaving them gazing on each other in dumb amazement.

CHAPTER VI.

The Impressario and his Theatre — Mode of getting up an Opera — Anecdote of Rossini and the Cardinal — Picture of an Italian Green-room — The first Evening of a new Opera — Rossini's Waggery.

After his success at Bologna, which is considered as the head-quarters of Italian music, Rossini received offers from almost every town in Italy. Every impressario (director) was required, as a sine qua non, to furnish his theatre with an opera from the pen of Rossini. The consideration he generally received for an opera was a thousand francs (about 40l.) and he generally wrote from four to five in a year.

The mechanism of an Italian theatre is as follows: the impressario is frequently one of the most wealthy and considerable persons of the little town he inhabits. It most commonly proves a ruinous undertaking. He forms a company, consisting of a prima donna, tenore, basso cantante, basso buffo, a second female singer, and a third basso. He engages a maestro (composer) to write a new opera, who has to adapt his airs to the voices and capacities of the company. The poem (libretto) is purchased at the rate of from 60 to 80 francs, from some unlucky son of the Muses, who is generally a poor hungry abbè, the hanger-on to some rich family of the neighbourhood. The character of the parasite, so admirably painted by Terence, is still found in all its glory in Lombardy, where the smallest town can boast of five or six families, with an income of five thousand livres. The impressario, who, as we before observed, is generally the head of one of these families, entrusts the care of the financial department of the concern, to a registrario, who is commonly some pettifogging lawyer, who holds the situation of his steward. The next thing that usually happens is that the impressario falls in love with the prima donna; and one of the great objects of curiosity among the gossips of the little town, is to know if he will give her his arm in public.

The troop, thus organized, at length gives its first representation, after a month of cabals and intrigues that form subjects of conversation for the whole period. This prima recita forms an era of the utmost importance in the simple annals of this little town, and of which larger towns can form no idea. During whole months, eight or ten thousand persons do nothing but discuss the merits and defects both of the music and singers, with all the stormy vivacity which is native to the Italian clime. This first representation, if no unforeseen disaster occur, is generally followed by twenty or thirty others; after which the company breaks up. This is what is generally called a stagione (season.) The last and best is that of the carnival. The singers who are not scriturati (engaged) in any of these companies, are usually to be found at Milan or Bologna; there they have agents, whose business it is to find them engagements, or to manoeuvre them into better situations when an opportunity offers.

From this little sketch of theatrical arrangements in Italy, some idea may be easily formed of the kind of life which Rossini led from 1810 to 1816. During this period, he visited in succession all the principal towns of Italy, remaining from three to four months in each. Wherever he arrived he was received with acclamations, and feted, by the dilettanti of the place. The first fifteen or twenty days were passed with his friends, dining out, and shrugging up his shoulders at the nonsense of the libretto which was given him to set to music. For, besides the fire of his own natural genius, Rossini was inspired with a good taste by his first admirer (the Countess P — of Pesaro.) She had read with him the works of Ariosto and Metastasio, as well as the comedies of Machiavel, the Fiabe of Gozzi, and the poems of Burati; he is therefore fully competent to judge of the worthlessness of these libretti. “Tu mi hai dato versi, ma non situazioni,” have I heard him frequently repeat to an unhappy votary of the nine, who stammered out a thousand excuses, and two hours after came to salute him in a sonnet, “umiliato alla gloria del pïu gran maestro d’Italia e del mondo.”

After two or three weeks spent in this dissipated manner, Rossini begins to refuse invitation to dinners and musical soirees, and falls to work in good earnest. He occupies himself in studying the voices of the performers, he makes them sing at the piano, and, on more than one occasion, he has been driven to the mortifying necessity of mutilating and “curtailing of their fair proportions,” some of his most brilliant and happy ideas, because the tenor

could not reach the note which was necessary to express the composer's feeling, or because the prima donna always sung false in some particular tone. Sometimes, in a whole company, he could find no one but a bass who could sing at all. At length, about three weeks before the first representation, having acquired a competent knowledge of the voices, he begins to write. He rises late, and passes the day in composing in the midst of the conversation of his new friends; who, with the most provoking politeness, will not quit him for a single instant. The day of the first representation is now rapidly approaching, and yet he cannot resist the pressing solicitations of these friends to dine with them a l'Osteria. Thi9 of course leads to a supper; the sparkling champagne circulates freely; the hours of morning steal on apace. At length a compunctious visiting shoots across the mind of the truant maestro; he rises abruptly; his friends will see him to his own door; they parade the silent streets with heads unbonneted, shouting some musical impromptu, perhaps a portion of a miserere, to the great scandal and annoyance of the good Catholics in their beds. At length he reaches his house, and shuts himself up in his chamber, and it is at this, to every-day mortals, most ungenial hour, that he is visited by some of the most brilliant of his inspirations. These he hastily scratches down upon odds and ends of paper, and next morning arranges them, or, to use his own phrase, instruments them, amidst the same interruptions of conversation as before. Figure to yourself a quick and ardent mind, susceptible of every impression, and capable of turning to advantage the most trifling occurrence or passing observation. When composing his "Mosé," some one said to him—" What, you are going to make the Hebrew sing! do you mean to make them twang it as they do in the Synagogue?" The idea struck him at once, and he sketched out on the spot a rough draft of the magnificent chorus so much admired in this opera, and which is observed to begin with a kind of nasal twang, peculiar to the Synagogue.

There is one thing, however, which, from my own observation, says his biographer, I know has the effect of paralizing the mind of this brilliant genius, ever creative, ever in action, — and that is the presence of a pedant who pesters him about glory and theory, and overwhelms him with learned compliments. It is then that he takes refuge from disgust in broad humour and waggery, though the pleasantries in which he indulges are sometimes more remarkable for their coarse and grotesque energy, than for any great sprinkling of attic salt. As in Italy, there is no supercilious court, which,

among its other amusements, reckons that of purifying the language as one, and as no body stickles about his rank when a joke and a laugh is in question, hence the vocabulary of such terms as are reputed gross and indecorous, is comparatively small. This may in some degree account, I will not say apologize, for the particular colouring of the poetry of Monti; that is noble — that is admirable — that is sublime; — and yet all this awakens nothing of the delicate scruples and timid prudery of more northern courts"

A certain pedant, a Monsignore by profession, had rushed without ceremony into Rossini's chamber, in his little inn, to pay his early respects, and was hindering him from rising with "Ella mi vanta per mia gloria," &c." when Rossini interrupted him: "Monsignore, you are going to say something about my glory; do you know what is my real title to immortality? Nothing less than that of being the handsomest made man of my age. Canova tells me that he means to take an early opportunity of modeling me for a statue of Achilles." At these words he jumped out of bed without more ado, and stood before the eyes of the astonished Monsignore in the complete costume of Achilles; this was certainly failing in respect to a Roman prelate. "Do you see this arm, — do you see this leg?" continued he; "when one is made after this fashion, surely one is certain of immortality!" He ran on rambling in this way, till the prelate, thinking he was taken with a sudden mad fit, fled for his life out of the chamber.

The labour of composition is nothing to Rossini; it is the rehearsal that annoys him. It is during those bitter moments that the povero maestro has to undergo the torture of hearing his happiest ideas, his sweetest and most brilliant airs, disfigured by every dissonance of which the human voice is capable. "It is enough to make one hiss oneself," would Rossini exclaim. He goes away from the rehearsal mortified to death; what pleased him in the morning, now fills him with disgust.

Yet, painful as such rehearsals may be to a young composer, I cannot help considering them, (says his biographer,) as the triumph of Italian sensibility. It is there that, assembled round a crazy piano, in an out-house (here dignified by the name of ridotto, green-room,) of the theatre of some little town, such as Reggio or Villetri, I have seen eight or ten poor devils of actors rehearse to the accompaniment of the noise and clatter of a neighbouring kitchen; I have heard them catch at once the most fugitive and

rapid impressions that music could produce. It is here that the amateur of the north would stand astonished to hear persons, perfectly ignorant of music, incapable of playing a common waltz on the piano, or even of describing the difference between one tone and another, sing and accompany by instinct, and with admirable spirit, music the most singular and original, and composed by the master almost under their very eyes. They commit a hundred faults; but, in music, such faults as are committed only through an excess of feeling or an over-earnestness to excel, are instantly pardoned, like those faults in love which proceed from an excess of ardour. I may be allowed to add, that these rehearsals, which so much charmed me — an ignorant and untutored man, would doubtless have sadly scandalized M. Berton of the Institute.

A plain-dealing man, a stranger to Italy, would hot hesitate at once to acknowledge, that nothing is so absurd as to think of forming composers and singers at any great distance from Vesuvius. In this land of the beautiful, the child at the breast is familiarized to song, though not exactly to such airs as Malbrouk, or C'est l'amour, l'amour. Under a burning climate, where tyranny has fixed its reign, where to speak has danger in it, happiness or despair express themselves more naturally by the plaintiveness of song than by the conventional signs of language. Nothing is here spoken of but music; no opinions are allowed to be discussed with freedom but those that relate to music.

We left Rossini rehearsing his opera at a crazy piano, in the ridotto of some little theatre, say Pavia or Imola. If this little obscure green-room is sometimes the sanctuary of musical genius and of an enthusiasm for the arts, there are also times when it becomes the arena on which lofty pretensions and wounded pride descend to settle their furious, and not unfrequently grotesque, disputes. The crazy piano has witnessed many of these tumultuous scenes: nay, there have been moments when the poor instrument itself was not allowed to remain neutral; it has been broken by many an infuriate fist, and hurled in fragments at the heads of the combatants. I strongly advise the curious traveller who makes the tour of Italy, and feels an interest in the arts, not to neglect this spectacle. The interior of this greenroom forms a topic of conversation for a whole town. Their future pleasure or ennui, during the gayest month of the year, chiefly depends upon the success or failure of the new opera, and this is again dependent, in a

great degree, upon the good or bad understanding that exists between the members of this irritable synod. Wrapt up in their intense anxiety about the issue of the event, this little town forgets for a time that there is any thing else going on in the world; and it is during this state of uncertainty that the impressario plays an admirable part; his vanity knows no bounds; he is all swagger and pompous importance, and is, to the very letter, the first man in his part of the world.

I have seen bankers, and men of avarice too, not regret the purchase of these flattering honours at the loss of fifteen hundred louis. The poet Sografi has written a charming little piece, in one act, on the adventures and pretensions of a strolling company of singers. It contains the character of a German tenor, who does not understand a word of Italian, which is laughable in the extreme. Yet outre as some of the characters are which he has painted, they have had their living representations. Marchesi, the famous soprano of Milan, could never, in the latter years of his theatrical career, be prevailed upon to sing the opening song, unless either mounted on horseback, or stationed on the top of some lofty eminence. At all events, the plume of white feathers, that nodded on his helmet, must not be less than six feet in height.

Even in our times, Crivelli refuses to sing his first air, unless it contains the words felice ognora, on which he finds it so convenient to run his divisions.

But let us return to our little Italian town, which we left in the anxiety, or rather in the agitation, that proceeds the day of the first representation of an opera. — At length the most important of evenings arrives.

The maestro takes his place at the piano; the theatre overflows; people have flocked from ten leagues distance. The curious form an encampment around the theatre in their calashes; all the inns are filled to excess, where insolence reigns at its height. All occupations have ceased; at the moment of the performance, the town has the aspect of a desert. All the passions, all the solicitudes, all the life of a whole population is concentrated in the theatre.

The overture commences; so intense is the attention, that the buzzing of a fly could be heard. On its conclusion the most tremendous uproar ensues. It is either applauded to the clouds, or hissed or rather howled at without mercy.

It is not in Italy as in other countries, where the first representation is seldom decisive, and where either vanity or timidity prevents each man from intruding his individual opinion, lest it should be found in discordance with the opinions of the majority. In an Italian theatre, they shout, they scream, they stamp, they belabour the backs of the seats with their canes, with all the violence of persons possessed. It is thus that they force upon others the judgment which they have formed, and strive to prove that it is the only sound one; for, strange to say, there is no intolerance equal to that of the eminently sensitive. When you see a man moderate and reasonable in what regards the arts, begin to talk to him of history, politics, or political œconomy; such a man will make a distinguished magistrate, a good physician, a sound lawyer, an excellent academician, in a word, whatever you will, except an enthusiast in music or painting.

At the close of each air the same terrific uproar ensues; the bellowings of an angry sea could give but a faint idea of its fury.

Such, at the same time, is the taste of an Italian audience, that they at once distinguish whether the merit of an air belongs to the singer or the composer. The cry is bravo David! bravo Pesaroni! or the whole theatre resounds with bravo maestro! Rossini then rises front his place at the piano, his countenance wearing an air of gravity, a thing very unusual with him; he makes three obeisances, which are followed by salvos of applause, mingled with a variety of short and panegyrical phrases. This done they proceed to the next piece.

Rossini presides at the piano during the three first representations, after which he receives his 800 or 1000 francs, is invited to a grand parting dinner, given by his friends, that is to say, by the whole town, and he then starts in his veturino, with his portmanteau much fuller of music-paper than of other effects, to commence a similar course, in some other town forty miles distant. It is usual with him to write to his mother after the first three representations, and send her and his aged father the two-thirds of the little sum he has received. He sets off with ten or twelve sequins in his pocket, the happiest of men, and doubly happy if chance should throw some fellow-traveller in his way, whom he can quiz in good earnest. On one occasion, as he was travelling in veturino, from Ancona to Reggio, he passed himself off for a master of music, a mortal enemy of Rossini, and filled up the time by

singing the most execrable music imaginable, to some of the words of his own best airs, to show his superiority to that animal Rossini, whom ignorant pretenders to taste had the folly to extol to the skies.

CHAPTER VII.

Rossini accepts an Engagement at Milan—"Aureliano in Palmira" — The Progress of Taste — Harmony versus Melody — On the present State of the Musical Grammar — M. Lavoisier — Rossini gradually adopts the German Style—"Dimetrio e Polibio."

After terminating his engagements at Bologna, Rossini accepted an offer made him at Milan, whither he repaired in the spring of 1814. It was for the Scala that he composed "Aureliano in Palmira." In spite of many beauties, and particularly the duet "Se tu m'ami, O mia regina," which some critics have considered as the most beautiful thing of the kind that has proceeded from our composer's pen — it proved unsuccessful. It was Rossini's first failure: it annoyed him not a little, and he at once determined on changing his style.

I must entreat pardon for making a little digression in this place, but it will tend to abridge many of the discussions into which we shall hereafter be led, in following our composer through the more stormy part of his career, when he was honoured with the hatred of pedants, and had a host of composers, great and little, leagued against him.

Envy once awakened, Rossini was no longer able to bear off the easy laurels of his earlier youth. He has always laughed at pedants: I wish he had always shown the same contempt to officious individuals, whose opinions have tended to produce an undue influence upon his works; an influence that threatens to prove fatal to his future fame.

Taste is the cant phrase of the day; let us examine a little into the simple signification of this word. As applied to the faculties of the mind, it bears a close analogy to the faculties of sense. This analogy we will consider for a moment. The unsophisticated taste of the child is pleased with the ripe and luscious peach, and revolts at strong drink and seasoned food; but, a little

more advanced in age, and escaped from the trammels of his pedagogue, he affects to despise plain dishes, and nothing will do but his ragout and sour crout, and perhaps a glass of eau-de-vie in imitation of his elders. But when arrived at that age which Danti terms "Il mezzo dél cammin di nostra vita," nothing will do but strong and piquant sauces, the stimulating curry of the east, the powerful curaçao of the west. I compare — though perhaps the homely nature of such a comparison demands an apology — I compare melody, with its simple charms, to the peach which delights the child; harmony, on the contrary, to those piquant sauces, the power of which is redoubled as the palate requires more stimulus.

It was about the year 1730, that a Leo, a Vinci, and a Pergolese, invented, at Naples, airs and melodies, the most sweet and delicious, that it is possible for the human ear to enjoy. This was the age of the child.

From 1/30 to 1823, the musical world, like the youth ripening into manhood, and vitiating his taste with age, has continued gradually to decline from music of a sweet and delicate, to that of a strong and piquant, nature. They have abandoned, if I may be allowed the expression, the simple delicacy of the peach, for the sour-crout, stimulating sauces and kirchewasser of those composers who administer to their pleasures, and are content to be repaid with glory.

The revolution in music, which has been maturing during a period of more than ninety years, has had its various and successive periods. But where is it to stop? This is a question I am unable to answer. All I know is, that each period, which has generally lasted from twelve to fifteen years, about the space that a composer continues in vogue, has been considered as the term of the revolution.

As for myself, I do not hesitate to declare it as my opinion, that "Tancredi" is the perfection of the union of ancient melody with modern harmony; and yet I am, probably, as much the dupe of my feelings, as those who have gone before me were of theirs. But, if I am a dupe, it is of a magician, whose wand has summed up the most beautiful forms of the ideal world of music to enchant my imagination; and if, by a kind of reaction, I am unjust towards the "Gazza Ladra" and "Otello," it is because they awaken sensations less

sweet and enchanting, though, perhaps, more strong and piquant in their effects.

I beg the reader not to lose sight of this my profession of faith, whenever I employ — the terms delicious, sublime, perfect. In moments of cooler reflection, when philosophy and respect for those good people who are not enthusiasts will predominate, I am not ignorant of the ridicule to which these terms lie exposed.

There is a common phrase in France, to indicate certain shades of opinion; — such a one is a patriot of 89: I profess myself a Rossinian of 1815. This was the year in which the style of music of "Tancredi" was all the vogue in Italy.

An amateur of 1780, who is a decided admirer of the style of Paisiello and Cimarosa, would probably find "Tancredi" as noisy, and as overcharged with accompaniments, as I do Otello and La Gazza Ladra.

I think I cannot do better than give a list of the great composers who have all in their turn enjoyed the reputation of having carried the truly beautiful in the art to the utmost degree of perfection. On the appearance of each new genius, a violent and interminable dispute was sure to arise between the amateurs of fifty, who had seen the good old times, and the young ones of twenty. Indeed, this may be set down as a truth, that a man of talent always writes in the style (in the proportionate mixture of melody and harmony) that he finds current at his entrance into the world.

The following is the list of those great artists whose names have always been anathematised by their immediate successors:

Alessandro Scarlatti, born at Messina, 1650, died 1730. He was the founder of the modern art of music.

Nicola Porpora, born at Naples, 1658, shone in 1710.

Francisco Durante, born at Naples, 1663, shone in 1718.

Leonardo Leo, born in 1694, shone in 1725.

Beldassare Galuppi, surnamed Il Buranello, from the little islet of Burano, near Venice, where he was born, 1703, shone in 1728.

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, born in Naples, 1704, shone in 1730.

Leonardo Vinci, born in 1705, shone in 1730.

Giovanni Adolfo Hasse, born at Bergandorf, near Hamburgh, 1705, shone in 1730.

Nicolo Jomelli, born at Airllim, near Naples, 1714, shone in 1739.

Logroscino, the inventor of finales, shone in 1739.

Pietro Guglielmi, creator of the opera buffa, born in the Neapolitan states, 1727, shone in 1752.

Nicolo Piccini, born at Bari, 1728, shone in 1753.

Giuseppe Sarti, born at Faenza, 1730, shone in 1755.

Antonio Saccini, born at Naples, 1735, shone in 1760.

Anfossi, born in 1703, shone in 1761.

Traetta, born 1738, shone in 1763.

Paisiello, born in 1741, shone in 1766.

Zingarelli, born 1752, shone in 1778.

Dominico Cimarosa, born 1754, at Capo di Monti, in the kingdom of Naples, shone in 1790.

W. A. Mozart, born at Salzburg, 1756, shone in 1780.

Mayer, born 1760, shone in 1800.

Generali, born 1786, shone in 1800.

Mosca, born in 1778, shone in 1800.

Paer, born 1774, shone in 1802.

Pavisi, born 1785, shone in 1802.

Beethoven, 1772. — Morlachi, 1788. — Pacini, 1800. — Caraffa, 1793. — Mercadante, 1800. — Kreuzer, of Vienna, 1800, and Maria von Weber, the hope of the German school. These, with Rossini, are the principal artists of the living school.

There is one composer in the last list, who makes us forget the author of Tancredi, viz.; the author of La Gazza Ladra, of Zelmira, of Semiramis, of Most, of Otello: the Rossini of 1820.

If it would not be thought too formal, I would offer the reader a comparison. As two majestic rivers take their rise in two distant countries, extend their widening tide through realms far divided, and yet finish at last by commingling their streams in one common tide; as, for example, the Rhone and the Saone.: such is the history of the two schools of music, the German and the Italian: they both had their birth in very distant cities, Dresden and Naples. Alessandro Scarletti founded the school of Italy, and John Sebastian Bach that of Germany.

These schools, represented in the present day by Rossini and Weber, will probably form themselves into one, and it is not improbable that this memorable union may take place under our own eyes.

An important question presents itself for our consideration. Ought harmony to have a separate existence, and be allowed to claim a separate interest from melody, or simply serve to augment the effect of the latter? I acknowledge that I am of the latter opinion. I have always considered it as a principle in the fine arts, that, in general, great effects are produced by one thing eminently beautiful in its kind, and not by the union of many things of a mediocre character. When the human heart is reduced to the necessity of chusing between two pleasures different in their nature, no trifling deduction is made from its enjoyments. If I wish to hear magnificent harmony I go and

listen to a symphony of Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven; but I go to the "Matrimonio Secreto," or "Il Re Teodore," if I am to be delighted with the charms of melody. If I wish to enjoy these two pleasures combined in the happy manner they ought to be, I go and hear the "Il Don Giovanni," or "Tancredi" I acknowledge that if I dive further than this into harmony, music has less charms, at least for myself.

It is almost necessary to make an effort to be incorrect in writing a phrase of melody; nothing, on the contrary, is so easy as to commit errors in noting down six bars of harmony.

Science is necessary for the composition of harmony; a fatal necessity, which has furnished a pretext for mathematicians and pedants of every description to intrude with daring indifference where men of genius "fear to tread."

The science of composition, as taught in many schools, is full of rules how to combine a series of harmonies, and write them with certain words according to rules of syntax; as to the proper and natural expression of these words, that is quite another affair.

Rossini, on the contrary, oppressed by the number and vivacity of the sentiments and shade of feeling that presented themselves to his imagination, has fallen into some venial sins against grammar. He was aware of this. In some of his original scores, he was frequently in the habit of placing a cross (+) at the side, opposite to which he wrote — Per soddisfazione de pedanti (for the satisfaction of pedants). A pupil who has been but six months studying music, would frequently be able to detect these negligences.

Let us just throw a glance upon the present state of the musical grammar. In order for its perfection, it is not sufficient to note down with scrupulous fidelity the usages of some particular nation; a more general study and a more extended experience are necessary for this purpose. Music yet awaits her Lavoisier. Gifted with a heart fully sensible of its effects, and with an enthusiasm for the art attempered by coolness and judgment, he will devote many years to experience, and then deduct from his experiments a code of rules for music, combining all the knowledge of past times with that of his contemporaries.

This work will be, in the true sense of the word, practical. At the term anger, for instance, he will present us with a great number of airs that appear to him most strikingly expressive of that passion. He will pursue the same method with respect to jealousy, love — happy and unhappy, revenge, & c.

Frequently he will show how the accompaniment impresses the imagination with a shade of sentiment, which the voice alone could not sufficiently express; sometimes he will show their particular effect with or without an accompaniment; at others, he will mark the point at which such an accompaniment becomes too complicated.

All these important points, illustrated with care, examined with judgment, and decided by experience, will, it is hoped, lead to the establishment of a true theory, founded on the nature of the human heart, and on the habits and constitution of the ear.

The greater part of the rules that, at this moment, oppress the genius of the musician, resemble the philosophy of Plato or Kant. They in general consist of certain mathematical reveries, invented with more or less ingenuity, but nearly the whole of which require to be submitted to the crucible of experience. They are imperious rules, founded upon nothing; consequences not derived from any principle: but the misfortune is, that, like the mandates of tyrants, they are surrounded by formidable names, whose interest it is to support their infallibility. If the deference shown to these rules be called in question, if the right upon which they are grounded be examined with scandalous temerity, how would the vanity and self-importance of a hundred professors be startled and take the alarm.

Do you know what happens to the best and most reasonable among them? They arrive at a certain epoch of their musical career, before they perceive that the edifice they are supporting has no firm foundation. They are filled with alarm; they quit the study of the language of the heart, to perplex themselves with philosophical discussions. Instead of erecting beautiful columns and elegant porticos, they lose the fair and creative season of youth, and squander their time in grubbing in the earth and rummaging for proper strata to begin upon. When at last they come forth covered with dirt and filth, their heads may be surcharged with mathematical truths, but the happy season of youth has fled, and their hearts are found devoid of all that warmth

of sentiment necessary to create such an air as the “Amor possente nume” of Armida.

There are certain chords, whose effect is evident, which at once speak for themselves: you have to hear them but once to be convinced of their qualities and power. Let every amateur who has a soul attend to the truth of this observation. The precipice he has to shun, is that impatience which leads men to mistake the romance of the science for its history.

Nothing is so painful as to examine, to doubt, to hesitate, when our pleasures are in question. In proportion as those of music are more delightful and captivating, the less are such prudent doubts attended to. In this situation of the mind, every brilliant theory is apt to enchant and seduce us. As with respect to the fancy, so in the theory of the arts, a due restraint is necessary to prevent the wanderings of the mind. If we are determined not to check our pleasures, but to follow the course most agreeable to us, at all events, let us not dogmatize.

The opposite error is that of persons devoid of all enthusiasm. When they go in search of new truths they are apt to stop half way, and unfortunately mistake the difficult for the beautiful. Is not this the point at which one of the happiest geniuses of our age is likely to stop? Since “Tancredi,” Rossini has become more and more complicated. His orchestra is gradually intruding upon the province of the singers. And yet, after all, his accompaniments, like those of the German school, offend rather in respect to quantity than quality. They are not without merit in themselves, but they intrench upon the freedom of the singer, and prevent him from indulging in those ornaments which are the inspirations of his genius. It is impossible to have a Davide with an instrumental accompaniment after the German manner.

We shall hereafter have occasion to relate some anecdotes relative to the court of Naples, where Rossini was induced to change his style. I do not believe this great artist himself (if, for once in his life, he could be induced to speak seriously on the topic of music,) could give any other reasons than those there adduced. He might perhaps plead in excuse that several of his latter operas were composed for large and noisy theatres. At San Carlo and the Scala three thousand four hundred persons can be accommodated at their ease. Sometimes, too, he has had to write for voices already on the decline.

If, in such a case, he had left the voice uncovered (scoperto), unprotected by strong accompaniment, or had composed airs of a flowing or sustained character (spianali e sostinuti,) it would have been a subject of apprehension least the faults of the singing should become too conspicuous, and prove fatal at once to the master and the singer. When, on a certain occasion, at Venice, Rossini was reproached for the absence of his former more measured and expressive melodies, his reply was; “Dunque non sapete per che cani io scrivo? (Don’t you know for what dogs I have to write?) only give me more Crivellis, and you should see what I would do.” It must be allowed that there is some truth in all this; concerted pieces must be multiplied in order to produce effect in such immense theatres. “La Gazza Ladra,” written for the vast interior of the Scala, appears to have a harder effect than is really the case, when presented in a smaller theatre, and especially when performed by a band that cannot be brought to pay due attention to the shades of the composition, and mistake piano and piano assai for signs of feebleness.

It was at Como, in the summer of this year, (1814,) that I heard for the first time Rossini’s “Demetrio ePolibio,” the first opera that proceeded from his pen. It is said to have been composed as early as 1809, at the request of the old tenor Monbelli, and arranged for the voices of his two daughters, by whom it was performed on the present occasion. The arrangement of this little company, which was almost entirely composed of a single family, was as follows. Of the two sisters, the elder Mariana, now Mad. Lambertini, performed the tenor part habited in man’s clothes, while the younger, Esther, filled the situation of prima donna. Old Monbelli, who was once a celebrated tenor, performed the part of the King, while that of the chief of the conspirators was filled by Olivieri, a very serviceable character, who has been long attached to the family. In the theatre he supports second-rate characters, and at home fills the office of cook and maestro di casa to the family. I should also mention, that the poetry of the libretto was from the pen of Mad. Monbelli.

I was quite charmed with the sweet and simple melodies of this little opera. The cavatina of the tenor, “Pien di contento il seno,” was full of the most tender and touching expression, and was sung in a very pleasing and unaffected manner by the elder of the sisters. Nothing could better paint the tender affection of a father for his son than the duet between the soprano and bass:

“Mio figlio non sei,

Pur figlio ti chiamo.”

But the favorite piece of the opera was the quartetto—” Donami, omai Siveno.” After an interval of nine years, during which, for the want of something better to do, I have heard a great quantity of music, I should have no hesitation in saying, that this quartetto is the masterpiece of Rossini. Nothing could be superior to it, and, if Rossini had written nothing else, his name would have been mentioned with those of Mozart and Cimarosa. There is a grace and a lightness of touch about it, which painters call fait avec rien, which, in my opinion, has not its equal in the works of any composer.

I still remember the lively impression it created. It was not only encored, but, according to an ancient usage at Como, was called for a third time, when a friend of the family came forward and declared that the ladies had been lately much indisposed, and if the encore of this quartetto was insisted on, it would perhaps disable them from doing justice to the remainder of the opera. —” But is there any other piece so strong?”—” Certainly,” replied the gentleman, “the duet Questo to cor ti giura amore,’ and two or three other pieces.” This assurance had its desired effect, and the enthusiasm of the parterre of Como was for a moment pacified. The promised duet called forth scarcely less applause than the former piece; and with justice too, for it was full of beauty and tenderness; it was a picture of love, containing more grace, and less of the doleful, than we are usually accustomed to.

The melodies of this opera were the first flowers of Rossini’s imagination; they breathe all the freshness of the morning of life, and their charm is heightened by the grace and modesty of the accompaniments.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rossini at Milan continued,—" Il Turco in Italia" — Anecdote of the Buffa Paccini — Galii.

Unsuccessful in "Aureliano in Palmira,'' which Rossini had composed for the carnival season, he made another effort in the autumn of the same year (1814,) and produced the "Turco in Italia which was considered as a kind of sequel to the "Italiana in Algeri." Galli, the celebrated bass, who had so ably supported the part of the Bey in the Italiana, performed the character of the young Turk; who, driven by a tempest, lands in Italy, and falls in love with the first pretty woman that chance throws in his way. Unfortunately the object of his passion has not only a husband (Don Geronio,) but a cavaliere servante (Don Narciso), who is no way disposed to give place to a Turk. Donna Fiorilla, a gay coquet, who is delighted with the handsome stranger, and eagerly avails herself of this opportunity of tormenting her jealous husband, a man greatly disproportioned to her in age.

The opening cavatina of Don Geronio is gay and lively in the extreme:

"Vado in traccia d'una zingara,

Che mi sappia astrologar;

Che mi dica, in confidenza,

Se coll tempo e la pazienza,

Il cervello di mia moglie

Potrô giungere a sanar."

This charming cavatina is quite in the taste and manner of Cimarosa. The part of Don Geronio is one of those on which the celebrated buffo Paccini founded his reputation. Almost every evening he sang the above air in a manner altogether different; sometimes he was the fond husband, driven to despair by the follies of his wife; at others a philosopher, who was the first to laugh at the extravagances of his better half. At the fourth or fifth representation, this performer hazarded a piece of ridicule, which is so contrary to the gravity of our manners that it will scarcely be credited. You must know that this evening all the world was busied about the unfortunate event that had happened to the poor Duke of —— and which, in quality of an injured husband, he did not bear with the most stoical fortitude. The particulars of this unfortunate event which he had discovered only that very day, furnished a topic of conversation to the whole of the boxes. Paccini, piqued at seeing no attention paid to him, and aware of the circumstances that were whispered in every part of the house, began to imitate the well known gestures and despair of the unfortunate husband. This reprehensible piece of impertinence produced a magical effect. Every eye was turned toward the performer, and when he produced a handkerchief similar to that which the poor Duke incessantly twirled about in his hand, when speaking of his lamentable occurrence, the portrait was at once recognized, and followed by a burst of malicious applause. But how give an idea of the general feeling, when, at this very instant, the unfortunate individual himself entered a friend's box, which was but a little above the pit. The public rose en masse to enjoy the spectacle. Not only was the unfortunate husband not aware of the effect his presence produced, but scarcely had he taken his seat, when he drew out his handkerchief, and by his piteous gestures, was evidently detailing the affair to his friend. One ought to be well acquainted with Italy, and with the keen curiosity that exists with regard to the scandalous chronicle of the day, to form any idea of the burst of convulsive laughter that echoed from every part of the house, at sight of the unconscious husband in his box, and Paccini on the stage, with his eyes fixed upon him during the whole of the cavatina, which had been encored, copying his slightest gestures, and caricaturing them in the most grotesque manner conceivable. The orchestra forgot to accompany, the police forgot to put an end to the scandal. Happily some good-natured friend entered the Duke's box, and by some lucky pretence adroitly drew him from the public gaze.

Paccini was not publicly horse-whipped on quitting the theatre.

The splendid voice of Galli was shown to great advantage in the salutation which he addresses to Italy on his first landing:

“Bell’ Italia! al fin ti miro,

Vi saluto amiche sponde.”

The author of the Libretto intended these words as an allusion to Galli himself, who is a great favorite at Milan, and appeared that evening for the first time after his return from Barcelona. The roll of his voice re-echoed like thunder through the immense interior of the scala; but it was thought that Rossini, who presided at the piano, had not done sufficient justice to these words. Incessant cries resounded of bravo Galli! but not a single bravo Maestro! for, as we have before observed, on the first representations of an opera, the applauses bestowed on the singers and the master are things perfectly distinct. Trifling as this circumstance may appear, it had a decided influence upon the fate of the opera, for although some of the pieces, particularly the piquant duet, “E’un bel uso di Turchia,” and the celebrated quintetto, “Oh! guardate, che accidente,” met with much applause, yet the opera, upon the whole, was coolly received. The national pride was wounded. They declared that Rossini had copied himself. He might take this liberty with little towns; but for the Scala, — the first theatre in the world! repeated the Milanese with pecular emphasis, — he must take pains to produce something new. That the fate of this opera was determined by some local circumstances, is evident from the fact, that four years after, the “Turco di Italia,” was reproduced in Milan, and received with the greatest enthusiasm.

CHAPTER IX.

Rossini accepts an Engagement at Naples — Anecdotes of M. Barbaja — King Ferdinand — Signora Colbran — Loses her Voice in 1816—" L'Elisabetta, Regina d'Ingliterra" — Signora Colbran's Powers in this Character — Rossini's Indolence — Hack Overture.

The glory of Rossini had now reached Naples, where the astonishment was that there could be any great composer who was not a Neapolitan. The director of the theatre at Naples was a M. Barbaja, formerly of Milan, who, from being a waiter at a coffee house, had, by good luck at play, and above all by the lucrative situation of manager of a faro-bank, acquired a fortune of several millions of francs. Trained up to business at Milan, in the midst of French fournisseurs, who, in army contracts, made and dissipated a fortune every six months, he could not fail of acquiring a certain tact, which was afterwards very useful to him. He had sufficient address to ingratiate himself into regal favour, and to obtain the post of director of the theatre San-Curio, as well as that of Del Fondo. He had sufficient foresight to see that, from the manner the reputation of Rossini was gaining ground in the world, this young composer, good or bad, right or wrong, would become the popular composer of the day. He therefore set off post, to go and find him out at Bologna. Rossini, accustomed to have to deal with poor devils of impressarj, who were ever on the verge of bankruptcy, was astonished at a visit from a millionaire, who would probably find it unworthy of his dignity to haggle about a few dozen sequins. An engagement was offered, and accepted on the spot. Afterwards, on his arrival at Naples, Rossini signed a scrittura for several years. He engaged to compose two new operas every year; and was moreover to arrange the music of all the operas M. Barbaja should think proper to produce either at San-Carlo, or the secondary theatre of Del Fondo. In consideration of this, he was to receive 12,000 francs per annum, as well as an interest in a bank for play, which was farmed out by M. Barbaja, and which brought in the composer some thirty or forty louis more yearly.

The musical direction of these two theatres, which Rossini had undertaken without giving it a moment's reflection, was an immense task, a Herculean labour: incredible was the quantity of music he was obliged to transpose and arrange, according to the compass of the voice of the different donnas, or according to the interest or caprice of their various patrons and protectors. This would have been sufficient to overwhelm a man of tender nerves or sombre habits; Mozart would have sunk under it. The gay and daring character of Rossini brought him through every obstacle, every snare that the envious laid to entrap him. All he saw in an enemy was a butt for satire and ridicule, in which he is a most perfect adept.

Rossini entered with a light heart upon the heavy duties that had devolved upon him, and, like the Figaro of his own Barbiere, undertook a thousand commissions that poured in upon him from every side. He got through them all with a smile, and a ready joke upon all who came in his way. This drew down upon him a host of enemies, the most sworn among whom, in latter years, has been M. Barbaja himself, whom he treated so unceremoniously as to marry his mistress. His engagement at Naples did not conclude till 1822, and has had a most decided influence upon his talents, his happiness, and the economy of his whole life.

Always happy, Rossini, towards the close of 1815, made his debut at Naples in the most brilliant' manner, with the serious opera of "Elisabetta, regina d'Inglitera."

But, in order to account for the success of our young composer, as well as for the mortifications which he was doomed to endure after his arrival at Naples, we must for a moment retrace our steps.

The personage possessing the highest influence at Naples, is a great sportsman, a great player at foot-ball, an indefatigable horseman; he is un homme tout physique, — a man made up of physical qualities. He possesses but one sentiment, and it is more than probable that that sentiment itself is connected with these physical habits, and that is the love of hardy enterprise. As for the rest, he is a being without a heart, either for good or evil; a being totally devoid of all moral sensibility of every kind, as it becomes a true sportsman to be.

— He has been called avaricious; this is an exaggeration: he cannot bear to transfer a guinea from one hand to another, but he will sign as many bonds upon his treasury as you please.

King Ferdinand had languished nine years in Sicily, imprisoned, as it were, in the midst of persons who were constantly annoying him with the terms, — parliament, finances, balance of power, and other outlandish words, which he could not comprehend, and indeed had no wish so to do. He arrives at Naples, and lo! one of the finest objects of his beloved city, that which of all others claimed the deepest regret during his long absence, — the magnificent theatre of San-Carlo, is destroyed by fire in a single night.

It is said that the monarch felt this blow more severely than the loss of a kingdom, or at least of a dozen battles. In the midst of his despair, a man presents himself before him, who says; “Sire, this immense theatre which the flames have devoured, I engage to rebuild in nine months, and more beautiful than it was yesterday.” M. Barbaja kept his word. On entering the new San-Carlo, 12th January, 1817, the King of Naples, for the first time these twelve years, felt himself really a King. From this moment, M. Barbaja was the first man in the kingdom. This first man of the kingdom, this director of theatres, and speculator in banks for play, was also the protector of the Signora Colbran, his first singer, who made a fool of him all day long, and of course held him entirely under her control. Signora Colbran, now Madame Rossini, was, from 1806 to 1815, one of the first singers of Europe. But voices, like other things, are not made to last for ever; and accordingly, in 1815, it began to lose its power; or, if we may venture to apply to her a term that is applied to vulgar singers, she began to sing false. From 1816 to 1822, Signora Colbran usually sung a note too high, or a note too low; such singing would anywhere else have been called execrable; but it was not proper to say so at Naples. In spite of this little inconvenience, Signora Colbran did not the less continue to be the first singer of the theatre San-Carlo, and was constantly applauded. Surely this may be reckoned as one of the most flattering triumphs of despotism. If there is one feeling more predominant than another among the Neapolitan people, it doubtless is that of music. Well, during five little years, from 1816 to 1822, this people, all fire, have been mortified, in a manner the most galling, and that in the dearest of their pleasures. M. Barbaja was led by his mistress, who protected Rossini; he paid to the monarch, questo che bisognava pagare, (such is the

Neapolitan phrase); he was patronized by this prince, and it was necessary to support the part of his mistress.

Twenty times have I been at San-Carlo; Signora Colbran began an air; she sung so miserably out of tune, that it was impossible to endure it. I saw my neighbours desert the pit; their nerves were horrified, but they did not utter a word. Let it be denied, after this, that terror is the principle of despotic government, and that this principle can work miracles. To obtain silence from a Neapolitan in his wrath! — I followed the example of my neighbours; we went and took a turn round Largo di Castello, and returned at the end of about twenty minutes, to see if we could hit upon some duet or concerted piece, in which the ill-omened protegée of M. Barbaja might not have to entertain us with the ruins of her splendid voice. During the short-lived constitutional government of 1821, Signora Colbran never ventured to make her appearance, unless preceded by a thousand humble apologies. The public, by way of a bit of spite, and in order to annoy their former annoyer, cried up the reputation of a certain Mademoiselle Chaumel, whose name was Italianized into Comelli, and who was known to be the rival of Colbran in more respects than one.

But at the time Rossini first arrived at Naples, and gave his “Elisabetta,” things had not come to this pass. The public were then very far from disliking Signora Colbran; at no period, perhaps, was this celebrated singer so handsome. Her beauty was of the most imposing kind; strong features, which, in the scene, produce a most powerful effect, a magnificent figure, an eye of fire a la circassienne, a profusion of raven locks; in fine, she is formed by nature for tragedy. This woman, who, off the stage, has all the dignity of a marchande des modes, the moment she enters the scene, with her brow encircled with the diadem, inspires an involuntary respect, even in those who have just quitted her in the tiring-room.

The first duet, between Leicester and his young spouse, is very striking and original. The great reputation acquired by Rossini in the north of Italy, had predisposed the Neapolitan public to judge him with severity: it may be said that this first duet, “Incauta! che festi?” decided the success both of the opera and the maestro.

Norfolk, jealous of the high degree of favour which Leicester had obtained with the queen, reveals to her the secret of his marriage. He tells her that her favourite, who has just returned victorious from the war in Scotland, and whose triumphal arrival forms the commencement of the first act, has brought with him his young wife, who has been introduced as one of the hostages, and admitted into the number of the queen's pages. The conflict of pride and affection in the heart of Elizabeth at hearing this, is admirably painted in the music, and was received with rapturous applause.

The queen, transported out of herself, orders the grand marshal of her court to assemble her guards, and prepare for the prompt execution of her orders, whatever they may be. She commands Leicester, together with the hostages from Scotland, to be brought before her. After these rapid orders, delivered in a few emphatic words, Elizabeth remains alone. It must be acknowledged that there was something very august in the manner of Signora Colbran at this moment. She paced the scene with a haughty yet firm step, and the expression of her eye was that of an offended queen, who was on the point of condemning to death her perfidious rival.

At length Leicester appears, and at the same moment the pages of the queen. The eye of Elizabeth scans them rapidly over, to discover the object of her hatred, who is at once betrayed by the agitation of her manner. At length the magnificent finale of the first act commences, which was followed by long and repeated plaudits.

The second act opens with a striking scene, between the haughty Elizabeth and the trembling Matilda. The accompanied recitative, in which the indignant queen addresses her rival, is magnificent, and produced a powerful impression.

Nothing but an actual view of Signora Colbran in this scene, could give an adequate idea of the enthusiasm with which she was received. An Englishman, one of the rivals of Barbaja, had sent to England for accurate designs of the costume of Elizabeth, which was scrupulously adhered to. This gorgeous apparel of the sixteenth century was admirably adapted to Colbran's fine figure and striking features. The spectators were acquainted with this anecdote, and the truth of the costume, as well as the beauty of the scenery, tended strongly to recall the image of a memorable epoch.

There was nothing affected or theatrical in the acting of Signora Colbran. Her power and superiority were marked in the strong expression of her dark Spanish eye, and the dignified energy of her action. She had the look of a queen, whose fury was only restrained by a sense of pride: she had the air of a sovereign, who had long been accustomed to have her slightest wish obeyed; nay, almost anticipated.

The scene in which this singer showed herself so great a tragedian, terminates in the duet between Elizabeth and Matilda, “Pensa, che sol per poco,” which is immediately changed into a magnificent terzetto, by the arrival of Leicester.

It is said that Rossini himself conceived this idea of the arrival of Leicester, in the midst of the duet between two women, the one of whom can scarcely restrain her bursting fury, while the other, wrought up by the energy of despair, boldly avows the love which marriage has sanctified: it may be safely said, that this is a master-piece of genius.

Leicester is thrown into prison, and condemned to death. Some moments before his execution, Elizabeth cannot resist the temptation of a last interview with the man who had awakened feelings of tenderness in a heart devoted to ambition. She appears in the prison where Leicester is confined. The traitor Norfolk had been there before her, and, on her arrival, conceals himself behind one of the pillars of the prison. The two lovers come to a mutual explanation. They discover the treachery of Norfolk, who, finding himself discovered, and despairing of pardon, rushes toward the queen with a poignard in his hand. Matilda, who at that moment enters to take a last farewell of her husband, is the means of saving the life of Elizabeth.

This brings us to one of the most magnificent finales Rossini ever composed. The exclamation of the queen, “Bell’ alme generose,” excited a general burst of enthusiastic applause.

The evening this opera made its appearance was that of a gala at court. The opera was in consequence very splendidly attended, and the whole effect was favourable to the composer. I remarked that in the box of the Principessa di Belmonte, near which I sat, there was at first a general disposition to be severe towards a maestro, who was born at a distance from Naples, and had

acquired his celebrity elsewhere than in the bel Partenope. But, as I before observed, her charming duet between Leicester (Nozzari,) and his young wife, disguised as a page (Signora Dardanelli), disarmed all opposition.

It must be allowed that the music of "Elisabetta" possesses much more of the magnificent than of the pathetic. It abounds with examples of Rossini's besetting sin; the song is overwhelmed by a deluge of ornaments) and many of the melodies seem rather to have been composed for wind-instrument than for the human voice.

But let us be just to Rossini. This was his first attempt at Naples; he was anxious to succeed, and there was no other way of doing this than by pleasing the prima donna, who entirely governed the director Barbaja. But Signora Colbran has no talent for the pathetic: like her person, it is magnificent; she is a queen, she is Elizabeth, but it is Elizabeth issuing her commands from the throne, and not Elizabeth touched with compassion and pardoning with generosity. Even if Rossini had possessed a talent for the pathetic, which I am far from being disposed to grant, he could not have employed it, for the reasons we have just stated. In the air, "Bell' alme gencrose," Rossini has artfully concentrated all the beauties, of whatever kind, that Signora Colbran could execute. We are presented, as it were, with an inventory of all the capabilities of her fine voice, and of whatever the powers of execution can effect. Flagrant as the absurdity is, yet so superior is the manner in which it is effected, that it requires several representations to convince us how sadly all these prettinesses are misplaced.

Rossini, who is never to be put out of countenance, would say, in reply to our criticism; "Elizabeth is a queen even in pardoning. In a heart so lofty as hers, a pardon, the most generous in appearance, is nothing more, after all, than an act of policy. Where is the woman, queen or no queen, who could pardon the affront of seeing herself preferred to another woman?"

Then all the old dilettanti grew angry; "The whole of your music," cried they, "is defective; there is a total absence of the pathetic. The character of Matilda should be tenderness itself, and there is nothing but the beginning of your terzetto — Paisa che sol per poco,' that can make any pretensions to this character; and, after all, this itself is as simple as a Notturno Frankly acknowledge that you have sacrificed expression and dramatic effect to the

embellishments of Signora Colbran,"—" I have sacrificed them to success!" would Rossini reply, cutting them short with that fierceness of manner which he can assume to a wonder. The amiable Archbishop of Tarento came to his assistance. "Scipio," said he, "when accused before the people of Rome, made no other answer to his enemies than this—' Romans, it is now such a day ten years ago that I destroyed Carthage; let us go to the Capitol, and return thanks to the immortal gods.'"

The effect produced by "Elisabetta" was prodigious. Though greatly inferior to "O- tello," for example, their are many things in this opera, that have a beauty and freshness about them rarely to be found elsewhere.

I had forgotten to mention the overture. It was favourably received, but an excellent connoisseur who was in the Principessa di Belmonte's box, declared, loud enough to be heard, that it was the same as that of "Aureliano in Palmira," with this only difference, that the harmony was more powerfully enforced. It has since been proved, that his assertion was altogether correct. When, a year after, Rossini went to Rome, and wrote the "Barbiere di Seviglia," his indolence made him bring forward the same overture a third time. Thus it is made to serve the double purpose of expressing the conflict between love and pride in the loftiest minds of whom history has preserved the memory, and the follies of the barber Figaro! Frequently a little change in the time is sufficient to impart an air of gaiety to accents of the profoundest melancholy, and vice versa. To be satisfied of the truth of this, one has but to sing the celebrated air of Mozart "Non più andrai farfalone amoroso," in a slower movement.

In speaking of the two great Italian theatres, the Scala and the San-Carlo, it will be seen that I give the preference to the former. Persons who have travelled in Italy, and who, soaring above the merely useful and convenient, have also a taste for the beautiful, will naturally enquire the reason of this. Nothing can be more unjust in appearance; Naples is the birth-place of the beautiful in song. Milan has been in a great measure spoiled by its vicinity to a people who reason too much about music. Thirty of the first composers in the world were born in the neighbourhood of Vesuvius, while scarcely a single one has appeared in Lombardy. The orchestra of San-Carlo is very superior to that of the Scala, which follows exactly the same principle in music as the present French school does in painting; all is uniform glare and

showiness. Through the mere dread of ridicule, this orchestra finishes by allowing no prominent effects; it resembles those physicians who let their patients die without help for fear of being called Sangrados. For fear of not being sweet and harmonious, or, in other words, for fear of that ridicule which, among an ultra-civilized people, easily attaches to every strong effort and every attempt at originality, the French painters have come at last to paint every thing en gris, not excepting the very verdure, that beautiful robe of nature, herself. It is the same at the Scala; the orchestra would think every thing ruined if it played otherwise than piano. This is the very opposite fault to the French orchestra, which prides itself upon being always forte, and of setting the singers at defiance; the orchestra of the Scala is their most humble servant.

So far all is in favour of Naples; but the absolute monarchy of the house of Austria is an oligarchical monarchy; that is, reasoning, economical, calculating. The grandees of Austria are great amateurs in music; the Austrian princes are personages of merit, and not deficient in science; but they are cautious not to do any thing without having first duly consulted certain venerable seers, without genius, it is true, but at the same time discreet and prudent to a miracle. On the contrary, the despotism of Naples with respect to San-Carlo and M.Barbaja, assumed the form of favoritism in its most amusing shape, and accompanied with even more than its usual absurdities. It has sometimes happened that the San-Carlo has been shut for a week together through the caprice of M. Barbaja. Instead of a grand ballet and an opera in two acts, he has sometimes given only one act of an opera, in order not to fatigue the nearly-exhausted voice of Signora Colbran, and a short ballet. Strangers have come to Naples, and staid there two or three months without being able to hear the second act of “Medea” or “Cora.” I had no great difficulty in bearing such a privation, but many of these strangers were Germans, and great sticklers for the music of Mayer. Besides, “Medea” and “Cora” were all the rage. For two whole months, only the first act was given, and during the two following, only the second, according as it suited either Signora Colbran’s voice or her caprice.

It is dangerous to talk of politics at Naples. I was acquainted with the charming family of the Marquis N —— but, as the politics of the various members of the family were different, a death-like silence prevailed at table, which was only interrupted by observations upon the weather, the last

eruption of Vesuvius, or the feast of St. Januarius. I should not forget to mention, that the very theatre, Rossini, and Signora Colbran, had become party affairs, upon which either a total silence must be maintained, or furious discussions were sure to follow; and these are carried to an excess in this land of sensibility, of which we in more northern latitudes can form but a very faint idea.—" What a charming opéra is that Mosè!" said the second son, who was a partisan of the king. "Yes," replied the elder, "and charmingly sung too! yesterday evening the Colbran sung only (non calava) half a note false!" — A dead silence followed. To speak ill of the Colbran is to speak ill of the king, and the two brothers had made up their minds not to get into a quarrel.

The only means the public have of taking their revenge is this: if, after listening to the first bars of her air, they found she was determined to sing false, they were also determined not to listen. There was no law against this. They drew back into their boxes, and fell into conversation, or filled up the time with coffee and ices.

In 1820, the way to make the Neapolitans happy was, not to give them a Spanish constitution, but to rid them of the Signora Colbran.

Rossini had no wish to enter into all the intrigues of Barbaja. It was soon perceived, that nothing was more foreign to his character than intrigue, and, above all, the spirit and consequences which it demands; but, when he was called by M. Barbaja to Naples, and became the fond admirer of Signora Colbran, it was difficult for the Neapolitans not to make him feel the effects of their ennui. But the hiss that was ever upon their lips, was constantly repressed by the seductive force of his talent. Rossini, on his side, not being able to place any reliance upon the voice of Signora Colbran, took refuge in the harmony of the German school, and departed more and more from true dramatic expression. He was continually persecuted by Signora Colbran for airs containing such ornaments as were suited to the state and qualities of her voice.

Thus we see by what a chain of fatal circumstances poor Rossini has been drawn into errors, and betrayed into all the appearances of musical pedantry. It is like a great poet, and a poet of the comic order too, forced to be learned, and to display his learning upon grave and solemn subjects.

CHAPTER X.

Rossini at Rome—"Torvaldo e Dorliska"—"Il Barbiere di Seviglia" — Cardinal Gonsalvi.

After the flattering reception which his "Elisabetta" experienced at Naples, Rossini was called to Rome for the Carnival of 1816, where he composed his semi-serious opera, "Torvaldo e Dorliska," for the theatre Valle, and his chef-d'œuvre the "Barbiere di Seviglia."

The first of these operas was considered as very mediocre, and quickly consigned to the tomb of the Capulets. There are, however, parts in it of considerable beauty, for instance, the air of Dorliska, "Ah, Torvaldo! dovesei?" which is highly expressive of passion, and when sung in a bold and energetic style, cannot fail of producing a powerful effect.

The sequel to this, which is a terzetto between the tyrant, the lover, and the buffa porter, "Ah! qual raggio di Speranza!" would have been sufficient to give celebrity to an ordinary master, but it added nothing to that of Rossini; for, when a composer has once produced something really great, he must never be feeble afterwards. This would be like a common romance from the pen of Sir Walter Scott, who may be considered as the rival of the maestro of Pesaro, in fecundity of genius and universal celebrity. Most assuredly, if some obscure author had written the Pirate and the Monastery, they would at once have raised him above the common ranks of literature. What distinguishes this great master is, the boldness of his traits, his negligence of details, and the grandeur of his touch; he knows the happy art of economizing attention in order to launch it out at once upon something important; these are likewise the points in which Rossini excels.

The tyrant sings a superb agitato: this is the true style adapted to a powerful bass. To such of my readers as are not acquainted with this air, it may be

satisfactory to know that it now forms a part of the celebrated duet in the second act of Othello, “Non m’inganno, al mio rivale.”

Rossini found the impressario of the theatre Argentina, tormented by the police, who refused all the libretti, (words of the opera,) under pretext of their containing certain political allusions. Indeed, among a people that is lively and discontented, every thing becomes an allusion. In a moment of disappointment and ill-humour, the impressario proposed to the head of the police, “Il Barbiere di Seviglia,” an excellent libretto, but which had already been set to music by Paisiello. The government, wearied out at length with prosing about decency and morals, consented. Rossini, who is intellectual enough to be modest when put in competition with real merit, was not a little embarrassed by this choice. He instantly wrote to Paisiello, who was at Naples, to acquaint him with the circumstance. The old maestro, who was not devoid of a mixture of gasconism, and who had been not a little piqued at the success of “Elisabetta,” replied very drily, that he was perfectly content with the choice the Roman police had made, and that he had no doubt as to the result.

Rossini wrote a very modest preface to the libretto, shewed Paisiello’s letter to all the dilettanti of Rome, and immediately set about the composition, which was finished in the short space of thirteen days. It was produced on the 26th December, 1816, on the first day of the Carnival. Having been unsuccessful in his first essay for the Roman theatre, Rossini felt considerable anxiety on this occasion; he has been heard to say, that, on taking his seat at the piano, his heart throbbed with a violence unknown to him before.

The Romans seemed to consider the commencement of the opera as very tiresome, and greatly inferior to that of Paisiello. They sought in vain for that graceful and inimitable naïveté, that style in which is the very model of simplicity. The first air of Rosina, “Io sono docile,” appeared entirely out of character. They charged Rossini with having substituted the pertness of a virago, for the complainings of a gentle and love-sick girl. The duet between Rosina and Figaro, which possesses an admirable lightness, and is the triumph of Rossini’s style, drew forth the first applause, and began to cheer the spirits of the disheartened composer. The air “La Calunnia” was pronounced to be magnificent and original. The Romans were not well

acquainted with Mozart in 1816, or they would have discovered that it was a close imitation of his style and manner, nay, if we may believe some critics, that it was copied from the air “La vendetta,” in the “Nozze di Figaro,” and other parts of the same illustrious author. This may be the case; but I would also add, that it was thus Raphael copied Michael Angelo’s magnificent fresco of the prophet Isaiah, in the church of Santo Agostino, at Rome.

After the air of “Basilio,” a still stronger want was felt of the native grace and expression of Paisiello. At length, wearied by the common things at the commencement of the second act, and shocked at what they considered a total absence of expression, the audience would hear no more, and the curtain fell. But, proud as they were of their musical knowledge, the Roman public found, that, by this act of haughtiness and want of dispassionate feeling, they had, as is often the case, been guilty of an act of folly. The matter was canvassed over at leisure, and in their cooler moments they began to see, that if Rossini did not possess some of the merits of Paisiello, that at least he had not that languor of style, which so often proves fatal to works of merit; that, if his airs had not all the finish of the old master, at least they were not separated from each other by such an eternal interval of wearisome recitative; like those little spots of refreshing verdure found amidst the wilderness of sand. On the second night of representation it was extolled to the clouds.

The overture gave general satisfaction: it was thought to be admirably expressive of the scolding ill-nature of the old and amorous guardian, and the complaining of the impatient ward. The little terzetto “zitti, zitti, piano, piano,” was encored with enthusiasm.

However, the Roman critics thought they discovered that Rossini had not only been inferior to himself, but to the generality of composers, in the expression of impassioned tenderness. “The music,(said they,) is gay, lively, and spirited, but it is not adapted to the subject. What! when Rosina finds in Count Almaviva a faithful lover, instead of a heartless seducer, as she had been led to suppose, shall she, in place of giving vent to a gush of extatic feeling, bewilder her voice, her lover, and the audience, with a series of roulades and cadences!” And yet these insignificant and ill-placed embellishments, have been applauded to the very echo in other capitals.

Music, and particularly that of the dramatic kind, has made a considerable progress since the time of Paisiello. The long and wearisome recitative has been discarded, concerted pieces are more frequently introduced, which, by their vivacity, and the strong stimulant of the crescendo, keep ennui at a distance, and allow the yawner no apology. It was the opinion at Rome, that, had Cimarosa composed the music of the "Barbiere,'' it might have been less animated and less brilliant, but would have been more comic, and infinitely more tender and impassioned.

We will take a rapid view of the prominent parts of this favorite opera.

The cavatina of Figaro, "Largo al factotum," is a master-piece of the gay and comic style; in every country where it has been heard, there has been but one opinion on the subject. The little duet "All' idea di quel metallo," is light and full of grace and naïveté. Of the air of Rosina, we have already seen the opinion entertained by the Roman critics; and yet it might be remarked, that this air of assurance in a young ward, who is persecuted with the addresses of an old guardian, is not so much out of character, and serves to impress us with a conviction that she will have the laudible resolution of disappointing his wishes at last.

The duet "Dunque io son... tu non m'inganni?" is, in all respects, a most finished composition, and pregnant with character and expression. The phrase "La sapea prima di te" (I knew it even before yourself,) might seem out of character to the more sedate inhabitants of the north of the Alps. I cannot help saying, that Rossini seems very gratuitously to have sacrificed a trait in the character of Rosina, that would have tended, very materially, to heighten its charm. Love, even the most impassioned, cannot exist without modesty; to deprive it of this feeling, is to fall into the error of the gross and the sensual. No doubt Rossini might plead a thousand precedents, in his favour, but it is not thus I should explain this want of delicacy in the air of Rosina. During the time Rossini was composing this opera at Rome, he was known to have mingled in a variety of adventures, which were more in the style of "Don Juan," than of "Coelebs in search of a wife." The character of the women by whom his society was courted, and whom he loved en passant, would naturally give a tinge to the creatures of his imagination. Scandal has said — but who will give credit to her malignity? — that Rossini was in the habit of singing over the airs of this opera, for the critical

opinion of his fair friends, and that in their eyes, timidity and tenderness would have passed for the silliness di un colegiale (of a green-horn.)

The misfortune of Rossini is, that he treats the passion of love as a mere affair of gallantry. Hence in those parts of the “Barbiere’ where he ought to be tender, he becomes elegant and recherche. He never rises above the temperate degree. This manner is very well in the usages of life, but it will not do where glory is in question. I find much more energy and latitude of feeling in the first works of Rossini; compare the “Pietra del Paragone” Demetrio e Polibio,” and “Aureliano in Palmira,” with the opera before us. I suspect that, at this period, he had become somewhat incredulous in love: this is rather extraordinary philosophy in a young man of twenty: all the better, it may be said, for his peace of mind; but all the worse for his music. Raphael, Canova, and a hundred other geniusses, had the folly to fall in love. Nothing can be more original and piquant than the gallantry in the passage; “Sol due righe di biglielto.” It is evident, that, however pleasing the idea Rossini hits upon, he is always fearful of pursuing it, lest he should become tedious. Compare the above duet with that of Farinelli, in the “Matrimonio secreto,” and you will find an abundance of phrases in the latter that Rossini would have rejected as being too long.

There is a just and lively expression of happiness in the “Fortunati i affetti miei,” though it must be confessed that the love described is rather that of a lively widow of five-and-twenty than of a girl of eighteen. Upon the whole, there are few, even of his tragic duets, in which Rossini has attained so high a degree of power and originality. Had he, like his colleague M. Mayerber, been born with fifty thousand livres a year, I can easily imagine that his genius would have declared for the opera buffa. But it was necessary to live; he found Signora Colbran, who only sings in the opera seria, all-powerful at Naples. Add to this, that the policy of Italy, as ridiculous in detail as it is impotent in great things, has so ordered it that the prices of admission to the opera seria, are three times as high as to the opera buffa; from which it may be gathered, that fools of every country, literary or not, imagine that the comic style is the easiest. Do such people judge from themselves, and from the consciousness they feel of the part they are themselves playing? Such was the bright idea of the system of policy established forty years since by Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, which deprived Italy of that delightful kind of indigenous literature, the “Comedia dell’ arte,” which was played

impromptu, and which Goldoni thought he could supersede by his insipid dialogue. The small remains of true comedy still existing in Italy are to be found among the marrionetti, so admirable in Genoa, Rome, and Milan: the pieces given in this manner, as being impromptu, escape the censure, and are founded upon the inspiration of the moment, and the passing interests of the day. Even more enlightened men give into the follies of this system; and it would scarcely be believed, that Cardinal Gonzalvi, an able politician, and who had formerly the courage to be the intimate friend of Cimarosa, can pass three whole hours in castigating the miserable libretto of an opera buffa. How delicate this tenderness for the Roman morals, this solicitude to preserve them pure and spotless! And are these the people that are in danger of being corrupted by the libretto of an opera? Good heavens! Raise four additional companies of gendarmes; hang every year some dozen of prevaricating judges; repress public peculation; scout corruption from the seats of justice: and then talk of purity and morals. Some of the most intrepid officers in Napoleon's service were natives of Rome — Julius II. found means of raising an army there — all the virtues of their great progenitors are not extinct: but two ages of the despotism of Napoleon would, perhaps, be scarcely sufficient to establish there, the decent morals of a second-rate English town; Nottingham or Norwich, for example. But we are digressing; let us return to the "Barbiere."

The entrance of Count Almaviva, disguised as a soldier, and the commencement of the finale of the first act, are models of lightness, spirit, and expression. There is a delightful contrast between the stupid vanity of Bartolo, who repeats three times, with peculiar emphasis, "Dottor Bartolo," and the exclamation of the Count aside, "Ah! venisse il caro oggelto!" The effect of the chorus, "La forza! aprite qua," is picturesque and striking. The moment of silence and repose that follows is introduced with great judgment; the ear feels, after the deluge of notes that has preceded it, the want of it in the most sensible manner.

The grand quintetto in the second act at the arrival and sending away of Basilio, is full of beauty in its kind. The same subject in the hands of Paisiello, is a masterpiece of grace and simplicity; and Rossini knew well in what repute it stood throughout the whole of Italy. At the last representation of the "Barbiere' of Paisiello, at the Scala in 1814, this piece was enthusiastically applauded, but it was the only one. I would recommend

amateurs to sing the two pieces over the same evening; in so doing, they will learn more musical truths in one half hour, than I could preach to them in twenty chapters. The old master places, in a new and comic light, the unanimity of the counsel given to Basilio, “Andate al letto,” and it is this which provokes a laugh as delicious and as inextinguishable as that of Homer’s Synod of the Gods. There is great dramatic truth in Rossini’s “Ehi, dottore, una parola,”—” Siete giallo corne un morto,”—” Quest a e febre scarlatina,” — but, after all, he must on this occasion yield the palm to the ancient master.

There is great spirit in the air of the old gouvernante Berta, “Il vecchio cerca moglie,” but unfortunately we generally hear it murdered by some worse than second-rate singer. To know the point and comic effect it was intended to produce, we ought to hear it sung by Rossini himself, which he is fond of doing, and which is really a treat. Such an air as this, which fills only a second-rate part in Rossini’s opera, would be sufficient to make the fortune of one of Morlachi’s compositions, or indeed, of any one of our composer’s numerous rivals.

Nothing can be more light, airy, and graceful, than the terzetto, “Zitte, zitte, piano, piano,” which in all the theatres of Europe is sure of an encore. Its only fault is that it is misplaced, by obliging the personages of the piece to lose an infinite deal of time at a moment when they ought only to think of making their escape, — but who ever thinks of noticing such a defect?

CHAPTER XI.

Rossini returns to Naples — San-Carlo — Signora Colbran — L' Otello — The jettatura at Naples — Anecdote of Stradella.

Elevated by the success he had obtained at Rome, Rossini returned to Naples in the spring of 1816, and recommenced his labours with fresh spirit.

San-Carlo, at this period, presented one of the most striking spectacles that the most enthusiastic and most fastidious amateur could desire. Signora Colbran was seconded by the two Davides, and by Nozzari, Garcia, and Siboni. Colbran sung, in the same year, in the "Elizabetta" and "Otello" of Rossini; the "Gabriella, de Vergy," of Caraffa; and in the "Cora" and "Medea," of Mayer; and all this with great sublimity of manner, and incredible powers of voice. But this splendid period was destined to be of short duration. After this year, the voice of Signora Colbran began to lose its power, and it was considered a singular piece of good fortune to hear her sing an air in tune. The mere dread of being always upon the brink of a false note, was sufficient to destroy the charm: in order fully to enjoy the beauty of music, one must not be reduced to the necessity of criticising.

The next subject proposed to Rossini was the story of Othello; but he had the good taste to object to the Italian imitation, or rather caricature, of Shakspeare. The author, the Marquese di Berio, is a man of consideration in Naples, and his libretto was at last adopted. The Italians have a very respectable translation of Shakspeare, by Fetoni, and Rossini has been heard to say, that, before sitting down to compose to the flat and insipid rhapsody of the Marquis, he took care to imbibe inspiration from the purer source of Fetoni's version. However, this inspiration did not seem to commence with the overture, which is by far too gay, and altogether discordant with the deep tragic interest, to which it ought to serve as a prologue.

The entrata of Othello' is splendid. It is a moment of interest, and required all the power of Rossini: it is animated with all the fire of his happiest moments, but would produce a more decided effect, had the music by which it is preceded been of a more simple character, and allowed to stand forward in bolder relief. Indeed, this is the great fault of the music of the German school.

The duet between Rodrigo and Othello, "Equal diritto mai" is beyond all praise; it has all the nerve and vigour of Mozart; it is at the same time the most perfect transcript of the language of passion, and in the highest degree dramatic in its effect.

All the world knows the "Impia ti maledico!" This is one of the strongest effects that music is capable of producing; but then the passage is stolen from the "Adelina" of Generali. The chorus "Ah, che giorno d'orror!" is full of power, and admirably in unison with the scene that precedes it.

The finale of the first act is magnificent in the extreme. The expression of the words "Smanio, diliro e tremo" is perfect. The trio is said by connoiseurs to awaken too many reminiscences of a similar movement in "Il Don Giovanni the part for the clarinet is the same. The accompaniment of the orchestra, during the time Othello is reading the fatal billet, is said to be the fragment of a symphony of Haydn, in E flat.

In the grand duet between Othello and Iago, in the second act, beginning with the words "Non m'inganno, al mio rivale," the cruel author of the "libretto," has, at last, allowed us to enjoy one of the situations of Shakspeare. We see the art of Iago dragging the unfortunate Othello towards the precipice. The music is full of energy and expression, and not unworthy of the dramatic situation of the great poet himself. Indeed, the whole story increases in interest towards the conclusion of the second act. The sorrows of the unhappy Desdemona, are managed with considerable address. She appears in her chamber at an advanced hour of the night, and reveals to her confidante the grief and sombre presentiments with which the news of the banishment of Othello, overwhelm her heart. At this moment the voice of a gondolier is heard on the Laguna, singing these verses of Dante:

“Nessun maggior dolore

Che ricordarsi del tempo felice

Nella miseria.”

At hearing these words, the unhappy Desdemona flies towards the window, exclaiming, “Who art thou that singest thus? How dost thou remind me of my unhappy lot!” It is then that her friend makes this touching reply:

“E il gondoliere, che cantando inganna

Il cammin sulla placida laguna,

Pensando ai figli, mentre il ciel s’imbruna.”

There is something very happy in the accompanied recitative in which these words are given. The song of the gondolier recalls to the memory of the young Venetian, the fate of a faithful slave, who had been the companion of her infancy, but died far from her country. Desdemona thus apostrophises her:

“Infelice ancor fosti Al par di me; ma or tu riposi in pace.”

In pacing her chamber, the eye of Desdemona falls upon her harp; she flies towards it, and chaunts to it a romance, composed to the memory of the African slave, her former nurse. As we have been, though not without justice, severe on the libretto of the good Marquese di Berio, it is but just to quote this romance, as a fair specimen of his poetical talents.

“Assisa a piè d’un salice

Immersa nel dolore,

Gemea trafitta Isaura

Dal più crudele amore;

L’aura fra i rami flebile

Ne repeteva il suon.

I ruscelletti limpidi

A caldi suoi sospiri,

Il mormorio mesceano

De’ lor diversi giri;

L’aura fra i rami flebile

Ne ripeteva il suon.

Salce, d’amor delizia!

Ombra pietosa appresta,

Di miei sciagure immemore

All’urna mia funesta;

Ne più répéta l’aura

De’miei lamenti il suon.

Ma, stanca alfin di spargere

Mesti sospiri e piante,

Mori, l’afflitta vergine,

Ahi! di quel salce accanto!

Mori! — Ahimè, che il pianto

Prosequir non mi fa!”

At length exhausted by her grief,

She hush’d her sad complaining;

Death brought the wretched maid relief,

From bonds her soul unchaining.

She died! — Ah, how can I prolong,

The burden of the plaintive song?

In the middle of the romance, Desdemona, distracted by her grief, forgets the air. At this moment a violent gust of wind breaks one of the panes of glass, of the gothic window of the chamber; this simple accident makes a deep impression on the mind of the unhappy woman, and is construed by her into an omen of her future fate. She resumes the song for a moment, but her tears prevent her from continuing it. She quits the harp, and flies to the bosom of her female attendant for relief. It is impossible, in such a situation, not to think of Mozart, and the thought awakens a sigh of profound regret.

The great merit of this opera, Rossini's chef d'œuvre in the forcible style, is, that it is full of fire; it is a perfect volcano, said the critics of San-Carlo. Yet it must be observed, that this force is always the same; there are no shades; we never pass

"From gay to grave, from lively to severe;"

The trombones are always in our ears. This violence, which those but little gifted in the arts are apt to mistake for the sublime, is rendered doubly monotonous by the almost total absence of simple recitative. Those of Otello are nearly all of the accompanied kind; this is a resource which the composer ought prudently to economize; when he lavishes it upon every occasion, what is he to do in movements where all the power of his art are necessary to be brought into action?

It was after one of the first representations of Otello, in one of those evenings of pensive melancholy, which are to be found only in the South, that Madame Gherardi, of Brescia, recounted to us the history of Hortensia and Stradella. It produced upon us an effect, under local circumstances, which it perhaps may not upon the reader. It is a trait of history, and gives a picture of the manners and government of that period.

In 1650, Alessandro Stradella was the most celebrated singer of Venice and of all Italy. At that period, musical composition was very simple. The maestro wrote little more than a sketch; the talent of the singer was much more creative than at the present day, and he was obliged to have recourse to his own genius in almost all the passages which he had to perform. It was Rossini who first thought of writing out at full all the embellishments (fioriture) which the singer was to execute. In 1650, the system in Italy was altogether different. The consequence was, that the charm of the music was much more inherent in the person of the singer; and, of the singers then in fashion, no one approached Stradella. It was proverbial, that he was the master of the hearts of his auditors. He went to enjoy his glory at Venice, at that period the most brilliant capital of Italy, and the city of all others the

most famous for its various amusements and the gallantry of its manners. Stradella was received with eagerness in the most distinguished houses, and ladies of the first quality contended for the advantage of taking his lessons. He was engaged by a noble Venetian to teach a young lady, of a noble Roman family, of the name of Hortensia.

She was a widow, and publicly courted by a noble Venetian, of one of the most powerful families of the republic. Stradella gained her heart. His portrait was shown us by Madame Gherardi; indeed, it was this picture, together with the feelings of the evening, which had been thrown into a train of melancholy by witnessing the story of Othello, that led to the relation of the anecdote. The portrait was that of a man of a superb figure, with a profound and pensive expression of countenance, and large black eyes, full of that feu contenu, that restrained fire, which makes so forcible an impression. The perfection to which the school of Titian and Giorgone carried the art of portrait-painting at Venice, allows us, even at the present day, to form a correct idea of the physiognomy of Stradelli. It is not difficult to believe that such a man, distinguished also by great talents, should have inspired a susceptible heart with passion, and have successfully rivalled a great nobleman, although himself without a fortune. He bore away Hortensia from the noble Venetian. The only thought of the two lovers now was, how to make as rapid a retreat as possible from the territory of the republic. Naples was the place towards which they directed their flight. After travelling in the most secret manner, they arrived at Rome in their way to that city, where they passed themselves for man and wife. Meantime the Venetian suitor, enraged at their escape, determined to satiate his revenge, by having them assassinated, in whatever part of the world they could be found; and, for this purpose, he hired two desperate bravadoes, by a large sum of money, and the promise of a still larger reward when the work should be accomplished. The assassins proceeded directly to Naples, the place of Stradella's nativity, supposing he would return thither for an asylum, in preference to any other part of Italy. After many fruitless researches in that city, they arrived in Rome, on an evening when there was to be a grand funzione, accompanied by music, in the church of St. John of Lateran. Entering with the crowd, they beheld Stradella. It was an oratorio of his own composition, in which he was to sing a principal part. Delighted at having at length found their victim, at the very moment they almost despaired of meeting with him, they resolved to lose no time; the performance was not to

close till the dusk of the evening, and they determined to avail themselves of this favourable opportunity for executing their purpose. They then surveyed and ran over the whole church, to ascertain if Hortensia was among the spectators. They were occupied in this search, when, after other pieces executed by common performers, Stradella at length began to sing. They stopped in spite of themselves; they listened to his sublime tones. Assassins as they were, their rocky hearts were softened. What a reflection, that in the whole world there was but one such perfect singer, and they were about to extinguish for ever that enchanting voice that had not its equal on earth! Remorse filled their hearts; they shed tears, and before Stradella's part was finished, had made up their minds to save the lovers, whose death, on receiving the wages of blood, they had sworn upon the Holy Evangelists. Here then we have an instance of the miraculous powers of modern music, which may lead us to account for the exaggerated tales of the great musicians of the days of fable. The ceremony over, they waited a long time for Stradella, outside the church. At last they saw him come from a private door, with Hortensia on his arm. They approached; complimented him on his oratorio, thanked him for the pleasure he had just given them, and confessed that it was to the impression which his voice had made upon them, and the tender feeling which it had excited, that he owed his life. They explained to him the fearful motive of their journey, and advised the lovers to quit Rome without delay, in order that they might make their employer believe that they had arrived too late.

After this providential escape, they hired a vessel, embarked that very night, for the purpose of going by sea to Spezzia, and reaching Turin by cross roads. The noble Venetian, on his part, having received the report of his emissaries, became more furious than ever, and, so far from relinquishing his purpose, was only stimulated to make a new attempt, and resolved to take upon himself the task of avenging his insulted honour. He therefore repaired to Rome to Hortensia's father, and persuaded the old man, that the stain inflicted on his family could only be effaced by the blood of his daughter and her ravisher. A spirit of vengeance, happily unknown in our days, was promoted by the constitution of the republics of the middle age, and cherished in the too susceptible hearts of the Italians. This was the honour of those ferocious times, the sole supplement to the laws, the only means of personal safety, in a country where a duel would have appeared ridiculous. The noble Venetian and the old man commenced a search throughout all the

cities of Italy. When at length a report was brought from Turin that Stradella was there, the old Roman, the father of Hortensia, took with him two bravos, celebrated for their address, provided himself with letters of recommendation to the Marquis de Villars, who was at that time ambassador of France to the court of Turin, and set off for Piedmont.

Stradella, on his side, warned by his adventure at Rome, had taken steps at Turin to procure protection. His talents obtained for him that of the Duchess of Savoy, then Regent of the state. This princess undertook to shelter the two lovers from the fury of their enemy. She placed Hortensia in a convent, and invested Stradella with the title of Maestro di Capella, and gave him an apartment in her own palace. These precautions were deemed sufficient; the fears of the lovers began to abate, and they enjoyed perfect tranquillity for several months. They began to imagine, that after the adventure at Rome, the noble Venetian had become weary of pursuing them; when one evening, as Stradella was taking the air on the ramparts of Turin, he was attacked by three men, who stabbed him in the breast and left him for dead. They were the aged father of Hortensia, and his two assassins, who, as soon as they had committed the deed, fled for an asylum to the palace of the French ambassador.

The assault had been witnessed by numbers of persons, who were walking in the same place. The noise of the transaction spread through the whole city, and reached the ears of the Duchess, who instantly ordered the gates to be shut, and the assassins to be demanded of the French ambassador. But, as they had made his palace their sanctuary, he insisted on the privileges granted to men of his function, refused to give them up, and finally favoured their escape. An inquiry was instituted into the circumstance of the letters of recommendation, when it was discovered that they had been obtained through the influence of one of the most powerful of the Venetian nobility.

However, contrary to all expectations, Stradella was cured of his wound, though it deprived him of the faculty of singing. Thus the Venetian beheld his murderous plans a second time baffled, but without abandoning the desire of vengeance. So implacable and so persevering was the spirit, that he was resolved to attempt the deed alone. To effect his purpose, he assumed an obscure name, and came to reside incognito at Turin, content for the time to watch the motions of Hortensia and her lover. We may perhaps be astonished

at the ferocity of those times, but such were the notions of honour that then prevailed, that if the noble Venetian had abandoned the pursuit of vengeance, he would have been an object of scorn and contempt.

A year passed in this manner. The Duchess of Savoy, more and more touched with the situation of the two lovers, who had suffered so much, and who seemed born for each other, was resolved to sanctify their mutual passion, and had the ceremony of their marriage performed in her own palace. Shortly after this, Hortensia, wearied with her residence at the convent, wished to take an excursion to Genoa. Stradella conducted her thither, and the morning after their arrival, they were both found poignarded in their beds.

CHAPTER XII.

Rossini revisits Rome—"Cerentola" — Proceeds to Milan—"La Gazza Ladra."

Rossini returned to Rome for the Carnival season, which commences the 26th December, and lasts till about the middle of the February following, where he composed "La Cenerentola," for the theatre Valle. The music of this opera is altogether Rossinian. Neither Paisiello, Cimarosa, or Guglielmi, ever indulged in the excess of levity that marks such airs as, "Una volta, e due, e tre!" this and many others like it, absolutely border upon the trivial. The cavatina of Don Magnifico, "Miei rampolli feminini is full of spirit and well adapted to display the powers and flexibility of a bass voice. The det, "Un segreto d'importanza," is the very perfection of the imitative art. It is very probable that this duet would never have existed, had it not been for that of the second act of the "Matrimonia Secreto,"

"Se fiato in corpo avete;" and yet, even if we knew the latter by heart, we should still listen to the duet of Rossini with pleasure. If it be an imitation, it is a legitimate one, and such as only a man of genius could produce.

This duet is followed by an orchestral movement, descriptive of a storm, during which, the carriage of the Prince is supposed to be overturned amidst the darkness. This is not at all in the German style; it neither resembles the storm of Haydn in the "Four Seasons," nor the composition of the same kind in the "Freischutz," of Maria Von Weber. The music has nothing either noisy or laboured in it, and yet it is true to nature; it has its moment of horror, and forms a pleasing contrast to the levity of the greater part of the rest of the music.

After the tempest comes the charming sestetto, "Questo è un nodo avilupato" so remarkable for its originality; the only fault objected to it is, its being too long in the part sung sotto voce.

The grand aria of "Cenerentola," at the end of the opera, is a bravura of considerable power, and highly expressive of the triumph of a good heart, which freely pardons those who have been the cause of her long years of suffering. This is the fifth opera of Rossini that terminates with a grand air by the prima donna.

This opera met with considerable success at Rome, and has since become a favorite in most of the capitals of Europe.

At the conclusion of the Carnival, Rossini proceeded to Milan, where, in the spring season of 1817, he composed the celebrated "Gazza Ladra."

The public of Milan had taken a pique at Rossini's quitting them for Naples, hence, on the first evening of its representation, the public flocked to the Scala with a full determination of hissing the author of "Il Barbiere."

"Elisabetta," and "Otello." Rossini was aware of this disposition on the part of the Milanese, and took his seat at the piano in by no means the best of spirits.

But he was most agreeably disappointed. Never was a piece received with such enthusiasm; furore would be the energetic term an Italian would employ. At every instant, the pit arose en masse, to hail Rossini with exclamations. At the close of the performance, the composer was heard to declare in the Café dell' Academia, that, independent of the exertions of the evening, he was overcome with fatigue at the innumerable obeisances he was called on to make to the public, who were every moment interrupting the performance with bravo maestro! viva Rossini!

Never did a more brilliant success attend the first representation of any opera, and the enthusiasm was not at all diminished by the run which it had of a whole season. The overture at once bespoke the favour of the audience. Who that has once heard this picturesque symphony will easily forget it? The introduction of the drum, as a principal part, gives it a reality which is rarely experienced in any other music. It is descriptive of the return of a young soldier to the bosom of his family, and to the maid of his heart, after the successes of a glorious campaign. All is joy, — but a joy that is to be overcast by a series of melancholy events. Yet the sorrow described is but of

short duration, and all again is happiness, doubled by the contrast of intervening events.

The cavatina of Ninetta, “Di piacer mi balza il cor,” is one of the happiest efforts of Rossini’s happy moments. To whom is it not familiar? It paints in the liveliest colours the artless joy of a young peasant girl; it breathes a heartfelt pathos worthy of a Mozart or a Cimarosa; never were the meaning and expression of words more faithfully translated into melody.

It has all the vigour of Cimarosa, and a vivacity to which this delightful composer but rarely attained. There is a pleasing and tender shade of sentiment introduced in the M 2 second part of the air, which makes us overlook the absurdity of the “Dio d’amoi’e,” in the mouth of a peasant girl.

The air was the triumph of Madame Camporese’s voice, and showed her power of awakening the tenderest sensibilities of the heart. Madame Fodor sings this cavatina with a voice which is above all praise, but defective in pathos and just accentuation. Like all performers who are deficient of sensibility and fire, not being able to render this cavatina affecting, she makes it rich. She overwhelms the inspirations of the master beneath a load of roulades and ornaments admirably executed, but altogether misplaced. Had Rossini been present, he would have addressed her in the same words he did another celebrated actress; “Non conosco piu le mie arie,” (I don’t know my airs again).

The first phrase, “Di piacer mi balza il cor,” ought to be given simply and without any ornaments; they ought to be reserved for the last part of the air, where Ninetta dwells upon the excess of her happiness.

Gay and brilliant fioriture (embellishments) are properly placed upon such words as, “Ah! gia dimentico I miei tormenti.”

At Milan, these shades of the air were well understood, and given with admirable effect by Madame Bellochi. It would be difficult to give an Englishman, who has not visited Italy and been an eye-witness of the intoxication of feeling that seizes an Italian audience when any thing superlatively good claims their attention, any adequate idea of the furor with which this air was received. The pit rose up en nuisse upon the benches.

They made Madame Bellochi repeat the air while they remained in this position. Not content with this, they demanded it a third time, when Rossini rose from the piano; “The part of Ninetta,” said he, addressing the front rows of the pit, “has a considerable deal of music in it, and if you insist on Madame Bellochi’s repeating it again, I fear she will be unable to go through the whole of the opera.” After some grave discussions in the pit, this was at last consented to.

The air of the young soldier is flat and feeble, and, above all, it is misplaced. On his first entrance, he flies at once to his mistress, leaving his father, mother, and the whole village, in the back ground, while he sings a song full of passion. Love is deprived of all its interest, when it loses sight of modesty.

The duet, “Come frenar il pianto,” is a chef-d’œuvre of the magnificent style, but it contains reminiscences of the introduction of the “Barbiere.” Some parts of the finale of the first act are accused of the same defect. There are also strong resemblances between the air, “Mi manca la voce,” of the Mosè, and the quintetto, “Un padre, una figlia.,’’

The duet, “E ben, per mia memoria,” is full of pathos, and it is only to be regretted that there are certain misplaced divisions at the close, which only tend to call off the attention of the audience to the powers of the singer, when it ought solely to be occupied with the feelings of the scene.

The chorus of the judges in the trial scene, “Tremate, o populi,” is the very triumph of the magnificent style; it is said to bear a strong resemblance to one of the chorusses in the Orfeo” of Gluck. Its effect is so imposing, that nobody thinks of laughing at the idea of seeing a whole tribunal in their wigs, break out a singing, at the moment a verdict is on the point of being pronounced; surely no higher eulogium could be uttered in its praise. The prayer, “Nume benefico,” is of the highest order of music; and yet, strange contradiction, in the same opera, a part of the criminal proceedings commences with a waltz; “Vuol dir lo stesso:” and a similar remark will apply to the movement, which poor Ninetta is made to sing at the moment of her own condemnation and her father’s arrest.

A critic has urged in Rossini’s defence, that the movement of the waltz is expressive of the terrible and inevitable rapidity of the blows of fate. He

says, that it is not the fault of music, if we have introduced the custom of adapting a certain dance, called the waltz to this movement; this fashionable folly will, perhaps, pass away in some twenty or thirty years, while the expression of the movement itself is eternal. Some persons might feel satisfied with such reasoning, not so the Milanese. After the first intoxication of feeling had subsided, they began to see the absurdity of this, and condemned it without mercy.

Some there were, violent partizans of Rossini, who maintained that it was a merit in him to have softened down the atrocity of his subject, and disguised its horror under the light and airy elegance of his cantilena. They said, that if Mozart had composed the music of the "Gazza Ladra," as it ought to be composed, that is, in the style of the serious parts of "Don Giovanni it would have been productive of a horror, scarcely endurable.

Galli performed the part of Ninetta's father with great effect. An anecdote is related of him and our composer, which shows that the latter has a degree of whim even in his malice. At the time Rossini was composing the present opera, he had quarrelled with Galli, from an idea that he was his rival with Signora Marcolini. You must know, that Galli had two or three middle notes in his beautiful voice, which he could take correctly in rapid passages, but which were sure to be out of tune when he was obliged to pause upon them. Rossini did not fail to contrive a recitative, in which Galli was compelled to dwell upon the identical notes which he was unable to sing accurately. The words occur in the part where he is relating to his daughter the dispute with his captain "Sciagurato ei grida, &c." The best of the joke however was, that Galli, piqued at the circumstance, obstinately refused to transpose these notes in the performance, which there would have been no difficulty in doing; the consequence was, that his own reputation suffered by this wickedly contrived passage.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rossini returns to Naples—" Armida"—" Adelaide di Borgogna"—" Adina, osia il Califfodi Bagdad"—"Mosè in Egitto" — The Poet Tortola — Anecdote of the air, "Dal tuo stellato soglio" — Rossini's Independance of Character.

Crowned with fresh laurels, Rossini returned to Naples in the Autumn of 1817, and immediately gave his "Armida." On the day of its first representation, the public visited him with the sins of Signora Colbran's voice. Besides, they were piqued at the extraordinary success of the "Gazza Ladra" at Milan, and could not understand why Rossini should produce any thing inferior for themselves. There is nothing so dangerous to disappoint a public in, as in the expectation of their pleasures. "Armida" was very coldly received, in spite of its magnificent duet, "Amor possente nume:" perhaps the most celebrated that ever proceeded from this composer's pen.

The genius of Rossini is eminently fitted for the pleasurable and voluptuous. An intense indulgence, at the expense, however, of delicacy of sentiment, is the ground-work of some of his finest airs. This is particularly evident in the present duet. I remember, one morning, when it had been executed in the sublimest manner at the casino of Bologna, that several ladies were embarrassed at expressing their opinion of its beauties.

The author of the libretto has contrived to despoil his beautiful subject of all its interest, and has made sad havoc with the classical text of Tasso. This opera contains several striking and very powerful choruses.

Of the opera Adelaide de Borgogna," which was brought out at Rome in the carnival of the same year, but little is known except the air, "O crude stellel" which is often performed, and heard with delight.

Of the opera “Adina, ossia il Califfo di Bagdadthe only particulars we are able to collect are, that it was written for the opera at Lisbon, and performed there in 1818, at the theatre San-Carlo in that city.

“Mosë in Egitto” was produced at Naples the same year, in the theatre San-Carlo, and performed, in the first instance, as a kind of oratorio during the lent season. The piece commences by what is called the plague of darkness, a plague so easily to be inflicted on the stage, and on that account so nearly bordering on the ridiculous: it is but to turn off the gas, and the business is done. The critics were disposed to smile at the rising of the curtain, but this feeling of levity was soon subdued by the solemn and impressive movement of the introduction. Overcome by the groans of his suffering people, Pharao exclaims: Venga Mosè!” Benedetti, who supported the character of Moses, appeared in a simple and sublime costume, which he had copied from the celebrated statue of Michael Angelo in San Pietro in Vincoli. I shall never forget the impression produced by the solemnity of the appeal: “Eterno, immenso, incomprensibil Dio!” inforced by some of the most solemn strains of which music is capable. This entrance of Moses recalls every thing that is sublime in Haydn, and perhaps recalls it too strongly. Up to this period, Rossini had composed nothing so learned as this introduction, which extends to the middle of the first act, and in which he has ventured to repeat the same form of song, the same motivos, at least twenty times, at very short intervals. This piece of hardihood and patience must have cost not a little to a genius as lively as that of Rossini.

The success of this opera was immense. Every good Parisian, in applauding a scene of Voltaire or Racine, at the same time applauds himself for his literary knowledge and the certainty of his taste. At each verse of Racine, he passes rapidly in review all the good reasons that have been adduced by the French rhetoricians, de la Harpe, Geoffroy, Dessault, &c to prove why he should not admire it. They are not less learned in Naples with respect to music. It was for this reason that, on the announcement of a very learned composition by Rossini, the self-love of the Neapolitans was awakened, who were delighted with an opportunity of applauding something scientific. I beheld around me vanity under twenty different forms, proud of an occasion of displaying its knowledge: one exclaimed on hearing a brilliant chord struck by the violoncellos, another at a note of the horn introduced exactly where it ought to be; some, already envious of Rossini, while they raised the

introduction to the skies, applauded it with a malignant air, to give their neighbours to understand that there was no doubt of its having been pilfered from some German author.

The magnificent duet, “Ah! se puoi cosï lasciarmi,” was received with acclamations of applause; bravo maestro! evviva Rossini! resounded from every part of this immense theatre. The young prince, the son of Pharao, has secretly fallen in love with a young Israelite; the people are commanded to depart, and the two lovers meet to bid each other an eternal adieu. This is one of the great subjects for a duo, which affords such scope to the energies of music, and of which Rossini has so often and so happily availed himself. This is not a piece of music of the moment; it must last as long as powerful feeling itself shall endure. The bass solo, “Taci, o Regina,” was received with great and deserved applause; it presented a favourable opportunity for the display of Porto’s powerful voice.

In the third act, the poet Tottola had sadly perplexed the machinists of the theatre by the introduction of the passage of the Red Sea; he did not reflect that the execution of this part of history was not so easy as the plague of darkness. From the situation of the pit, it is impossible to give a view of the sea except in the distance: in the present instance, it was absolutely necessary that it should appear more in the fore-ground, in order to represent the passage of the Israelites with effect. The machinist of San-Carlo, in attempting to resolve this important problem, had fallen most woefully into the ludicrous. The pit beheld the sea raised five or six feet above its banks, and the boxes, overlooking the waves, saw the little lazzaroni whose business it was to roll backwards the silken waves at the voice of Moses. The whole house burst into laughter, but they were good-natured in their merriment; they would not be angry, and repressed those hisses which an audience of our own would not have failed to pour forth without mercy. They were willing to overlook this absurdity at the end of the piece, and did nothing but talk of the beauty of the Introduzione.

The next day, it was whispered that this opera was the work of I know not what German master. As for myself, it appeared to me evident that there was too much of Rossini’s spirit, and too many of those orchestral turns a la sans-souci, if I may be allowed the expression, for it to be German. However, as in point of plagiarism, every thing may be feared from the indolence of

Rossini, I could not help feeling something of the general doubt. To make sure of the fact, some of Rossini's enemies wrote to the said German composer to beg him to state candidly whether the work was his or not. A few weeks after, a letter was received from this poor devil of a composer, protesting with all the simplicity in the world, that he really was not the author of the introduction to the "Mosè and that he had never in his life composed any thing so good. This satisfied the most incredulous; the fame of the "Mosè" spread daily, and the Neapolitans were more and more delighted with applauding the science and beautiful harmonies which it contained.

The following season it was resumed with the same enthusiastic admiration of the first act, and the same bursts of laughter at the passage of the Red Sea. The following day, one of my friends called about noon on Rossini, who, as usual, was lounging in his bed, and giving audience to a dozen of his friends; when, to the great amusement of all, in rushed the poet Tottola, who, without saluting any one, exclaimed: "Maestro! Maestro! ho salvato l'atto terzo."—" Eh! che hai fatto?" &c. "Maestro! I have saved the third act."—"Ah! what can you have done, my good friend?" replied Rossini, mimicking the half burlesque, half pedantic, manner of this poor son of the Muses; "Depend upon it they will laugh in our faces as usual."—" Maestro, I have made a prayer for the Hebrews before the passage of the Red Sea." — Upon this the poet pulls from his pocket, a large bundle of papers, as formidable as a lawyer's brief, and gives them to Rossini, who immediately set about deciphering the desperate scrawl. While he is reading, the poet salutes the company, smilingly, all around, every moment whispering in the composer's ear; "Maestro, e lavoro d'un ord."—"He! lavoro d'un ora"—"What! the work of an hour!" exclaimed Rossini.

The poor poet, shrinking into nothing, and trembling lest the composer should play off upon him one of his usual practical jokes, shrugs up his shoulders, forces out a laugh, and, looking at Rossini, exclaims, "Si Signor; si Signor Maestro!"—" Well, if it has taken you an hour to write this prayer, I engage to make the music in a quarter of the time; here, give me a pen and ink." At these words, Rossini jumps out of bed, seats himself at a table en chemise, and in eight or ten minutes at the farthest, had composed this

sublime movement, without any piano, and in the midst of the clatter of the conversation of his friends. “There,” said Rossini, “there is your music, away about your business.” — The poet is off like lightning, and Rossini jumped into bed, and joins in the general laugh at poor Tottola’s parting look of amazement. The following evening I did not fail to repair in good time to San-Carlo. The same transports attended the first act; but, when they came to the famous passage of the Red Sea, there were the same pleasantries, and the same disposition to laugh. But this was repressed the instant Moses began the new and sublime air: “Dal tuo stellato soglio.” This is the prayer that all the people repeat after Moses in chorus. Surprised at this novelty, the pit was all attention. This beautiful chorus is in the minor key; Aaron takes it up, and the people continue it. Last of all, Elcia addresses the same vows to heaven, the people answer; at this moment they all throw themselves on their knees, and repeat the same prayer with enthusiasm; the prodigy is wrought, the sea opens to present a passage to the chosen people. The last part of the movement is in the major key. It would be difficult to give an idea of the thunder of applause that resounded from every part of the theatre. The spectators leaned over the boxes to applaud, exclaiming, “bello! bello!o che bello!” Never did I behold such a furor, which was rendered still more striking by the contrast it presented to the previous disposition of the house to be merry. The success of the “Gazza ladra” at Milan, though immense, was tranquillity itself compared to this. Happy people! this was no longer an applause à la Française, the applause of self-sufficient vanity, as in the first act; it was the genuine tribute of hearts overflowing with pleasure, and grateful for the boon thus gratuitously bestowed upon them. Let it, after this, be denied if it can, that music has a direct and physical effect upon the nerves.

The Germans are persuaded that “Mose” is the chef-d’aeuure of Rossini. Nothing can be more sincere than this praise: the Italian master has condescended to speak their language — he has been learned — he has sacrificed to harmony.

As to myself, Mose has always struck me as somewhat tedious. I do not deny but that I enjoyed great pleasure at the first representations, and once a month, if well sung, I can still hear it with satisfaction; but it appears to me to be deficient in dramatic effect. Those operas of Rossini which possess this character, I can hear with lively pleasure twenty times together.

“Mose” was the first opera for which Rossini was remunerated in a suitable manner: it produced him 4200 francs: he had received only 600 for his “Tancredi,” and a hundred louis for his “Otello.” The custom in Italy is, for the score of an opera to remain the property of the impressario for the space of two years, after which, it becomes that of the public. It is in consequence of this absurd law, that the music-seller, Ricordi, of Milan, has gained a fortune by Rossini’s operas, while their author has been left in poverty.

Far from deriving an annual income from his operas, as would be the case in France, Rossini is obliged to have recourse to the complaisance of these impressarj, if it happens that, during the first two years, he wishes to produce these works in any other theatre, than that for which they were composed.

Rossini has been often advised to go to Paris, and re-set the comic operas of Sedain, Marmontel, and other good writers, who have introduced dramatic effect into their works. In six months Rossini would have amassed a fortune of two hundred a-year, a sum by no means unimportant to him, before his marriage with Signora Colbran. In other respects, nothing could be more ill-advised than such a step. Were Rossini to live six months among the French, he would become a common every-day kind of man; he might have two or three crosses of honour more, but much less gaity of character, and no genius: his mind would soon have lost its wonted energy and elasticity. Only look, I do not say at our great artists, for I would not wish to be thought invidious, but, for example, to the life of Goethe, written by himself, and particularly to the “Histoire de l’Expedition de Campagne,” and see what men of genius gain by coming within the atmosphere of courts. Canova refused to live at that of Napoleon, at Paris. Rossini would, doubtless, have come in continual contact with the court; heretofore his principal connexions have been with the impressarj and singers, and Rossini, the poor Italian artist, has a hundred times more dignity in his manner of thinking, and a more noble independence of spirit, than Goethe, with all his philosophy. In the eyes of the former, a prince is but a man invested with magisterial duties, more or less elevated, and of which he acquits himself more or less meritoriously.

In France, Rossini would have been nothing, unless he had become a man bristling with repartée, a pleasing man with the ladies, and who knows? a politician. The state of society in Italy has allowed him to be only one thing

— a musician. A black waistcoat, a blue coat, and a cravat once a day, is a costume, which he would not abandon, though his obstinacy should cost him the loss of an introduction to the greatest princess in the world. Such a barbarism does not prevent him from being less welcome in Italy among the ladies. In France it would have been—”Oh, the bear!” Hence it is, that in this land of excessive polish, there are numbers of spruce and charming artists, who are every thing in the world, except faiseurs de chefi-d’œuvres (creators of masterpieces.)

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Revolution caused by Rossini in Song — On describing the Characteristic Traits of different Singers — Strong Feeling indispensible in the Fine Arts — Canova — Requisites, in order to enjoy the true Beautiful in Music — Disappointed Composers turn Critics — State of Singing when Rossini began his Career — Rossini and Velluti — Rosini and Colbran — Operas in Rossini's second manner.

The Gabriellis, the Todis, the de Amicis, the Bantis, have passed away; nothing remains of their enchanting talents, but the fame, the voice of which grows daily more feeble, and is overwhelmed by the exaggerated praises of cotemporary artists. Such is the fate of a Le Kain, a Garrick, a Sestini, a Pacchiarotti.

We have seen many sciences, and some arts, spring up under our own eyes: for instance, a taste for the picturesque, in landscapes and in pleasure-gardens, which was unknown in the days of Voltaire, and of which the sombre chateaus built under Louis XV., with their paved court-yards, and their long avenues of clipped trees, stand as melancholy testimonies. Nothing is more natural, than that the more delicate arts, those whose object is to administer pleasure to souls of feeling and sensibility, should be the last to spring up.

Perhaps, in our days, the true art may be discovered, of describing, with exactitude, the talent of a Mademoiselle Mars, a Pasta, or a Catalani; so that a hundred years hence, the sublime but fugitive talents of these artists may be distinctly portrayed, and definitely understood, by a future generation. If an exact portrait of the characteristic talents of great singers could be taken, not only the glory of the individual would gain thereby, but the art itself would make immense advances. Philosophers have thought, that what forms the essential difference between the genius of man and the extraordinary instinct of certain animals, is the faculty possessed by the former, of

transmitting to other individuals of his own species, the progress, however inconsiderable, which he has made in that particular art or profession in which it has been exercised. Such transmission is complete with respect to a Euclid and a Lagrange; it holds good only to a certain point in regard to the art of a Raphael, a Canova and a Morghen; may it not one day be established with reference to the art of a Davide, a Catalani, a Fodor? Towards the advancement of this object, I shall offer a few hints.

In the first place, to be capable of enjoying the beauty of the fine arts, we must feel strongly. I will remark, in passing, that the persons renowned for their wisdom, either in a nation or in a particular society, are never chosen from among those beings, who have received from heaven the gift of feeling strongly. But a very small number of those gifted individuals, such as an Aristotle, among the ancients, have been endowed with the astonishing faculty of analyzing to-day, with perfect exactness, the powerful sensations which yesterday filled them with the most lively transports. As to the vulgar herd of philosophers, though the powers of their logic may prevent them from falling into error, with respect to other important objects of research, yet when they come to meddle with the fine arts, where strong feelings are in question, it is well if they do not come from the attempt covered with ridicule. Such was the fate of d'Alembert, and of a host of others, whose names it would be profanation to mention with his.

What distinguishes nations with respect to painting, poetry, music, &c is the greater or less number of pure and spontaneous sensations which the individuals of those nations, even those of the vulgar class, receive from the arts. People who passionately love music, though of ever so wretched a kind, will be nearer to a good taste than those reasoning men who love even the most perfect music, according to rule, principle, and moderation.

Canova used to relate a little anecdote which he heard from one of his American admirers. It was respecting a savage, who beheld for the first time a figure in a peruque in a window at Cincinati. Canova showed a little paper of eight lines, which was a translation of the expressions of astonishment and enthusiasm which fell from this savage at the sight of this wooden head, the first imitation of a human figure he had ever beheld. The modesty of Canova, who was one of the simplest and most unaffected of men, prevented him from adding what we will tell for him. A man of taste, on beholding

Canova's sublime group of Venus and Adonis, at the house of the Marquese di Berio, at Naples, in which this great sculptor has depicted the goddess as agitated by a sad presentiment, at the moment of her bidding adieu to her lover, who is going to the chase, in which he perishes: a man of the most finished taste, on contemplating this admirable chef-d'œuvre of grace and delicacy of sentiment, expressed his admiration precisely in the terms employed by the savage. Thus it is evident, that the effect produced by intense admiration upon the minds of these two men, was absolutely the same; the only difference, unhappily but too common a one, is, where the admirer of Canova is a pedant, whose first solicitude is to make himself admired. The whole difference lies in the exterior object, which excites the same degree of admiration and delight in two beings, in other respects so different from each other. It is but too evident, that expressions of admiration in the arts go no farther than to prove the degree of enthusiasm in the man who admires, and by no means the degree of merit in the thing admired.

When a man tells you that he admires a great singer, Catalani or Fodor, for instance, the first question to be asked is, whether this man was born in a religion where good singing is admitted into the churches? Suppose a man, of a mind the most susceptible of enjoying the concord of sweet sounds; if born at Glasgow, how would you have him admire a Davide? All must be simplicity with him; the ornaments of Davide would to him be incomprehensible things. The inhabitant of Glasgow, who, though in other respects, a very estimable man, has never had an opportunity of hearing fine music but three or four times in his life, would be, with respect to Davide, what we ourselves were with regard to a painter of Berlin, who had represented one of the battles of Frederick the Great on a piece of ivory of the size of a crown piece. Except by the help of a glass we could distinguish nothing. The glass which is wanting to the inhabitant of Glasgow, is the pleasure of having applauded, at fifty representations, the "Barbiere di Seviglia," sung by the delightful voice of Madame Fodor. The inhabitant of every village in Italy hears singing twice or thrice a-week at church, and music in every street, written, if you please, without much genius, but executed with neatness and precision, — qualities that suffice for the education of the ear. This is what is entirely wanting to the inhabitant of Glasgow.

Music may boast of having made an immense progress in a country, when the reply made by the majority of an audience, to justify their applause, is —"the thing pleases me." Such would doubtless have been the reply of the Athenians if a stranger had asked them to give a reason for the transports which a tragedy of Eschylus excited among them; the treatises of Aristotle had not yet opened the mouths of people who have nothing to say. On the contrary, now-a-days all the world aspires to explain the why and the wherefore of their enthusiasm; and the utmost contempt would be shown to an unsophisticated visitant of the opera, who should reply with unaffected simplicity—"Because I feel it." But this is not all; the misfortune is that the evil extends still further. An audience determined to judge in the absence of all feeling, have created a crowd of artists: poets by virtue of the poetics of Aristotle, and musicians by virtue of musical institutions. The consequence is that society is overrun with poor artists, who, in their youth, having nothing to offer at the shrine of the arts, but the cold inspirations of a soul devoid of enthusiasm; and, later in life, but those mortifications of" spirit, which are the effect of humbled vanity, and a heart overflowing with spleen. Some of these poor artists, out of heart at the hisses with which they are always received, set themselves up for judges; they print, and we read such amusing phrases as the following — The sepulchral voice of Madame Pasta! — this, with respect to music, is to deny that light is light.

What tends to destroy the arts in a nation, or, at least, to hinder their growth, is that class of critics whose souls are without sensibility, and deficient of a certain tinge of the romantic, but who, for the rest, have studied, with cool perseverance and mathematical exactitude, every thing that has been said or written upon the unhappy art which they afflict with their learning. We here find, in nature, the reality of an image that has become a common place in poetic theories: — that an excess of cultivation is fatal to the progress of the fine arts. I hasten from making an odious application of these general reflections, to continue the history of Rossini.

When this great composer began his career in 1810, of all the fine arts, that of music had felt most sensibly the fatal effects of war, with all its cruel reactions. In the north of Italy, at Milan, Brescia, Bergamo, and Venice, the public mind, since 1797, had been engaged by objects very different from those of music and song. Even in 1810, the conservatory at Milan, had produced no talent of any note. At Naples, not one of those celebrated

establishments was existing at this period, which had for such a length of time supplied Europe with Masters and singers, capable of awakening a true enthusiasm for music, and of making its power be thoroughly felt. Singing was no longer taught except in some obscure churches; and the two last men of genius, whom Naples produced, the composers Orgitano and Manfrocci, had been educated there only at the commencement of their career. There was no one to succeed them, and nothing was found on the banks of the Serbeto but silence, nothingness, or the feeble attempts of an incurable mediocrity. Babini, that great singer, who has remained without a rival, had seen Rossini; but his voice was enfeebled by age, and he could only recount to the composer the miracles that it had once performed. Crescentini shone at Saint-Cloud, where he led Napoleon into the only piece of folly with which the civil government of this great man can be reproached; but, though a chevalier de la couronne de fer, he was lost to Italy. Marchesi was no longer upon the stage.

The sublime Pacchiarotti saw, with tears in his eyes, the downfall of the art, which had formed the charm and glory of his life. With what feelings must not the soul of this true artist have been overwhelmed, he who had never allowed himself to utter a note or make a single motion, without having previously considered how far it was calculated to answer the existing wants of the spectator, the only end of all his efforts, when he beheld a great singer actuated by the pitiful ambition of rivaling the violin in mechanical merit, in a variation of thirty-two demi-semiquavers to a bar! That art, which was formerly the most touching, is quietly settling itself down into a simple matter of business. After a Babini, a Pacchiarotti, a Marchesi, and a Crescentini, the art of song has fallen to so sad an ebb, as to be now-a-days, with a very few exceptions, a mere correct and inanimate execution of a certain number of notes. So little does it require, in 1823, for the formation of a good singer! But the ottavino, the great drum, the serpent, have the same ambition, and attain to it with nearly the same success. The invention of the moment has been banished, that happy art by which so many fine effects are often obtained from the extemporaneous performance of a singer; and it is Rossini whom I accuse of this great revolution, so fatal to the interests of the art.

We have seen that, through the political circumstances of Italy, Rossini, at his first entrance upon his musical career, found but a very small number of

good singers, and the few that were left, were on the point of quitting the stage. In spite of this state of poverty and decline of the art, so different to the abundant means that were in the hands of the ancient composers, Rossini, in his first productions, remained faithful to the style of his predecessors; he respected the claims of the voice, and only sought to augment the triumph of song. Such is the system upon which "Demelrio e Polibio," "L'inganno felice," "La Pietra del Paragone." "Tancredi" &c were composed; Rossini then wrote for Marcolini, Malanotte, Manfredini, and the family of the Monbelli. Why did he not continue to pursue this happy system, — he who is himself so good a vocalist, and who, when he takes his place at the piano to try one of his own airs, seems so transformed into the singer, that we can scarcely pursuade ourselves he is at the same time, the inventor of the song? A little event took place, which produced an instantaneous effect on the young composer's mind, and made him at once alter his views. The errors into which this has been the means of leading him, is a source of deep mortification and regret to his most serious admirers.

Rossini arrived at Milan, in 1814, then twenty-two years of age, to compose the "Aureliano in Palmira." There he became acquainted with Velluti, who was to sing in his opera. Yelluti, then in the flower of his youth and talents, and one of the handsomest men of his time, had no small share of vanity, and was fond of displaying, and of abusing, the powers of voice with which nature had gifted him. Before Rossini had an opportunity of hearing this great singer, he had written a cavatina for the character he was to perform. At the first rehearsal, Velluti began to sing, and Rossini was struck with admiration: at the second rehearsal, Velluti began to show his powers in gracing (fiorire); Rossini found the effect produced, just and admirable, and highly applauded the performance: at the third, the simplicity of the cantilena was entirely lost, amidst the luxuriancy of the ornaments. At last the great day of the first performance arrives; the cavatina and the whole character sustained by Velluti, was received with furor; but scarcely did Rossini know what Velluti was singing — it was no longer the music he had composed: still, the song of Velluti was full of beauties, and succeeded with the public to admiration: after all, can it be said that they were in the wrong for applauding what gave them so much pleasure?

The pride of the young composer was not a little wounded; his opera fell, and it was the soprano alone who had any success. The ardent mind of Rossini at once perceived all the advantages that might be taken of such an event: not a single suggestion was lost upon him.

It was by a lucky chance, we may suppose him to have said to himself, that Velluti discovered he had a taste of his own; but who will say that, in the next theatre for which I compose, I may not find some other singer who, with as great a flexibility of voice, and an equal rage for ornaments, may so spoil my music, as not only to render it contemptible to myself, but tiresome to the public? The danger to which my poor music is exposed, is still more imminent, when I reflect upon the great number of different schools for song that exist in Italy. The theatres are filled with performers, who have learned music from some poor provincial professor. This mode of singing violin concertos, and variations without end, tends to destroy, not only the talent of the singer, but also to vitiate the taste of the public. Every singer will make a point of imitating Velluti, without calculating upon the relative compass of his voice. We shall see no more simple cantilenas; they would appear cold and tasteless. Every thing is about to undergo a change, even to the nature of the voice. Once accustomed to embellish, to over-load the cantilena with high-wrought ornaments, and, to stifle the work of the composer, they will soon discover that they have lost the habit of sustaining the voice and expanding the tones, and consequently the power of executing largo movements; I must, therefore, lose no time in changing the system I have followed heretofore.

I am not myself ignorant of singing; all the world allows me a talent this way; my embellishments shall be in good taste; for I shall at once be able to discover where my singers are strong, and where defective, and I will write nothing for them but what they can execute. My mind is made up: I will not leave them room for a single appogiatura. These ornaments, this method of charming every ear, shall form an integral part of my song, and shall be all written down in my score.

And, as for those good gentlemen, the impressarj, who pretend to pay me handsomely, by giving me for sixteen or eighteen pieces, for the first characters, the same as they gave my predecessors for four, or six pieces at the most, I know a way of being even with them. In every fresh opera, I will

serve up three or four of these pieces, which shall have nothing new in them but the variations. Instead of being left to the caprice of some miserable singer, without either life or invention, they shall be all written down in full, with taste and science; and yet, after all, the advantage will be entirely on the side of these rascally impressarj.

At a later period, at Naples, Signora Colbran, having only a broken voice to assist her through his grand operas, he was obliged, still more cautiously, to avoid the spianato and sostenuto, and to dash furiously into the gorgheggi (the warble,) the only species of song in which Signora Colbran can acquit herself with any honour. An attentive examination of the scores written by Rossini, at Naples, will show how far his passion for the prima donna carried him; scarcely a single air is found in the cantabile spianato (the smooth and flowing) style, either for herself, or, for the best of all possible reasons, for the other performers. Rossini was no longer solicitous for his own glory; indeed, perhaps, of all artists, he is the one the most careless upon this point. A fatal consequence of this complaisance to Signora Colbran is, that of these nine operas composed at Naples, not one can be sung elsewhere, without losing a great portion of its effect.

Had Signora Colbran only possessed an extraordinary compass of voice, an easy resource would have been to transpose the parts (puntare); and, by this simple process, certain notes belonging to the peculiar diapason for which the master had to write, would disappear. By means of this transposition two good singers, though with very different voices, may often produce a great effect in the same character.

Unfortunately, it is not so with the music which Rossini composed at Naples. The difficulty is not merely as to the compass of the voice, but with that more stubborn, and almost insurmountable obstacle, the quality and nature of the ornaments.

For the truth of this assertion, I appeal to any amateur who has read the different parts, destined for Davide or Signora Colbran.

Thus it was, that Velluti, at Milan, in the “Aureliano in Palmira gave Rossini the first idea of that revolution, of which, at a later period, he was to be the

author; and Signora Colbran, at Naples, obliged him to carry this revolution to an extent, I think, fatal to his glory.

The operas written at Naples, which we have enumerated above, form what is termed Rossini's second manner.

CHAPTER XV.

"Ricciardo e Zoraide"—"Ermione"—"Odoardo e Cristina" — Anecdote of the latter Opera—" La Donna del Lago" — Unsuccessful on the first representation — Succeeds on the second — Rossini goes to Milan.

In the autumn of 1818, Rossini produced at San-Carlo, his serious opera of "Ricciardo e Zoraida the principal characters of which were sustained by Signora Colbran, Nozzari, Davide, Benedetti, and Signora Pisaroni. The libretto is by the Marquese di Berio, who lately died here. He was one of the most amiable of men, and a great patron and friend of Rossini. He was a great encourager of the arts and of letters, and his loss is severely felt in the polished circles of Naples. The story of the piece is taken from the poem of "Ricciardetto but it must be confessed that it does not breathe that lyric interest, which was likely to inspire Rossini with a profusion of brilliant thoughts.

This, like several of this composer's operas, has no overture. Rossini has often tried to convince the managers and his friends, by a number of very specious arguments, that overtures are not only very unnecessary, but very absurd things; but I believe the true secret is, that Rossini does not like the labour of composing them, and that his reasonings serve only as a pretext for his natural indolence.

The Introduzione is very brilliant and spirited. The duet in the first act, "In van tu fingi, ingrata!" between Colbran and Pisaroni, met with much applause, as did also the terzetto, "Cruda sorte," between the same singers and Nozzari. This is one of the happiest pieces of the whole opera; the first movement is recommended by its novelty, and the second by the energy and impassioned feeling which it breathes throughout. It was tumultuously encored, and the frequent—" bravo maestro!" that resounded from every part of the house, summoned the composer from his seat at the piano, to make his usual grave obeisance to the audience. A cavatina of Davide,

“Frena o ciel,” and the duet in the second act, “Ricciardo che venga?” were also much and deservedly applauded. A sestetto, in the first finale, without any accompaniment, beginning “Confusa, smarita!” is full of beautiful harmony. The style of the opera is oriental, magnificent, and impassioned; and it met with entire success.

On the 20th February, 1819, he brought out a cantata, written in honor of his Majesty, the King of Naples, and sung by Signora Colbran, at the theatre San-Carlo. It was full of grace and expression, and the simple and appropriate accompaniment was much admired.

During the Lent of the same year, he produced his serious opera of “Ermione.” It was so coldly received, as to amount almost to a failure; only a very few parts of it were applauded. The libretto was taken from the “Andromaque” It was an essay of Rossini’s. He wished to imitate the style of Gluck, and attempt something after the manner of the French opera; but it was but an attempt, and one that he will most probably not feel much disposed to renew.

On the 9th of May following, he produced a cantata, which was performed on occasion of a visit made by his Majesty, Francis I. of Austria, to the theatre San-Carlo. It was sung by Colbran, Davide, and Rubini, and honoured by the gracious notice of the Sovereign.

Rossini was very active this year, 1819. Besides the works above mentioned, he also composed an opera, entitled “Odoardo e Cristina,”which was performed in the spring, at the theatre San-Benedetto at Venice. This opera introduced to the public Carolina Cortesi, one of the prettiest actresses that has appeared upon the stage for some years. The history of this opera is curious.

The impressario of San-Benedetto had engaged Rossini for a consideration of from four to five hundred sequins; an enormous sum in Italy. The libretto which he sent to Rossini at Naples was entitled “Odoardo e Cristina.”

Rossini, who was at that time desperately in love with Signora Chaumel, or Comelli, could not tear himself away from Naples, till within a fortnight previous to the opening of the theatre of Venice. To pacify the impatience of

the impressario, he had transmitted him from time to time a quantity of charming pieces of music. The words, it is true, were somewhat different from those that had been sent him from Venice; but, who pays any attention to the words of a serious opera? It is always the same thing over again, félicita, felice ognora, crude stelle, &c.; and at Venice nobody reads a libretto serio, not even, I believe, the impressario who pays for it. At length, only nine days before the first representation, Rossini appears. The opera begins; it is applauded with transport; but unfortunately there was a Neapolitan merchant in the pit, who sung the motivo of all the new pieces, even before the singers began them. His neighbours were all amazement. He was asked where he had heard the new music? "New music! (said he,) why this is from 'Ermione' and 'Ricciardo;' things we have been applauding at Naples these six months. I was just going to ask why you had changed the title of the opera. The duet, 'Ah, nati in ver noi siamo,' which is one of the prettiest things in 'Ricciardo' Rossini has changed into the cavatina of your new opera; and what is still better, he has not even changed the words."

During the divertisement, and the ballet, this fatal piece of news was circulated every where, and the caffés were full of dilettanti, who were seen conning the matter over, and endeavouring, as well as they could, to qualify their admiration. At Milan, such a thing would have roused the national vanity into fury; at Venice, it only raised a laugh. Ancillo, a delightful poet, penned upon the spot a sonnet on the unhappiness of Venice and the happiness of Signora Comelli. In the mean time, the poor impressario, distracted, and with ruin staring him in the face, runs to look for Rossini; he finds him: "Well, what did I promise you?" says the latter, with the utmost sang-froid imaginable; "to write something for you that should be applauded. This has been successful, e tanto basta. Besides, if you had but common sense, would you not have perceived by the soiled and worn edges of the copy, that it was only old music I was sending you from Naples? Go to, for an impressario who ought to be more rogue than fool, and you are only the latter."

Had Rossini said this to some persons, he would have expected a stiletto in reply; but the good impressario of Venice had "music in his soul," and was not "fit for stratagem and slaughter." Delighted with that which he had just heard for the first time, he pardoned in a man of genius the weaknesses of love.

The expedient thus employed by Rossini at Venice, was certainly carrying things to extremes', it was not in his usual manner: but of late years, he has been obliged to have recourse to a variety ofexpedients. One of these is to produce his operas in different places. He then adds one or two really new pieces; all the rest consists of old ideas served up under a new form. Thus his music, lively and piquant as it is in other respects, wants the feeling of novelty, so essential to the beautiful in music.

On the 4th of October, 1819, Rossini produced the "Donna del Lago," which was sung at the theatre San-Carlo, by Signora Pisaroni (one of the least handsome figures that can be imagined), Signora Colbran, Nozzari, Davide, and Benedetti. It may be said that, after the "Elisabetta" Rossini succeeded only by the force of his genius. His principal merit lay in his style, which was altogether different from that of Mayer and his other contemporaries, and in the wide range of his ideas, which possessed a character entirely new to the public. He enlivened the tediousness of the opera seria, and imparted to it a life and animation to which it had before been a stranger. But then the public could not separate Rossini from the general discontent that was felt against M. Barbaja and the Signora Colbran. Impatience at last rose to its height, and made itself heard in a manner that could not be misunderstood. I have seen Rossini quite ill with the hisses that resounded from every part of this vast interior. This, in a man of his natural indifference, and who feels a perfect confidence in his merits, spoke volumes. It took place at the first representation of the "Donna del Lago."

The first scene created a feeling of pleasure. The solitary lake in the land of Ossian, with its interesting inhabitant guiding her solitary boat to the shore, gave a tone to the feelings altogether favorable to the character of the piece. Signora Colbran, guiding her little bark with admirable grace, sung her first air, and very well.

The public was all impatience for an opportunity to hiss, but none was afforded them. The duet with Davide, that followed, was equally well sung. At length Nozzari appeared, in the character of Roderick Dhu; he had to enter from the back-ground, and, from the nature of the scenery, was placed at an immense distance from the orchestra. His part began by a strong portamento di voce. He swelled his voice into a magnificent burst, that might almost have been heard to the Strada di Toledo. But as, from the situation in

which he stood, he could not hear the orchestra, unfortunately this burst of voice was nearly half a tone too low. I shall never forget the sudden outcry of the pit, delighted with a pretext to shew their disapprobation: a menagerie of hungry lions let loose upon their prey can convey but a faint image of the scene;

Nothing can convey an adequate idea of the fury of a Neapolitan audience, when either offended by a false note, or furnished with a just pretext for satisfying some ancient grudge. The air of Nozzari was followed by the appearance of a number of bards, who came to animate the Scottish troops to battle by the sound of their harps. This finale for three choirs is evidently an attempt on the part of Rossini to rival the ball-scene in "Don Giovanni," with its three orchestras. The military march, with its splendid trumpet-accompaniment, heard in contrast with the chorus of bards, is very striking. This first representation took place on a gala-day; the theatre was illuminated, and the court was not present to place any restraint on the uproarious spirit of the audience. Nothing could equal the extreme hilarity of a number of young officers who filled, per privilegio, the first five rows of the pit, and who had drunk deeply to the health of their king, as all good and loyal subjects should do. One of these gentry, at the first sound of the trumpets, began to imitate, with his cane, the noise of a horse in full gallop. The public were struck with the facetiousness of the idea, and, in an instant, the pit is full of five hundred imitators, who join in this novel accompaniment. The ears of the poor maestro, however, found neither novelty nor pleasure in such an addition to his music; it was but too ominous of the issue that awaited his opera, and he sat upon thorns, in expectation of the fate that was prepared for him.

The same night he had to set off post for Milan, to fulfil an engagement, which had for some time been contracted there. We afterwards learnt that, with his usual spirit of gasconade, he had spread the report both on the road and at Milan, that the "Donna del Lago" had been applauded to the skies. He thought he was telling a fib, and ought to enjoy all the honours of it; yet all the while, it so happened, he was only telling the truth. The fact is that, on the following day, the public was too candid not to acknowledge the act of injustice into which they had been betrayed; and accordingly, the next evening, the opera was hailed with all the applause which it so justly merits.

The trumpet-accompaniment was softened down by diminishing the number of instruments, which on the first evening were really deafening.

I recollect that the same evening, after the opera, the Principessa di Belmonte exclaimed; “Oh, if the poor Rossini could but know of his success, what a consolation it would be to him on his journey! How melancholy he must be jogging along at this moment!” Little did we dream of the piece of gasconism he was that very moment playing off on the road.

This opera is so well known, from the effect with which it was given here last season, as to render any analysis unnecessary. The pieces most applauded at Naples were the chorus of Maidens, “Di, nibaca donzella the little duet “Le mie barbare vicende;” the “O quante lagrime!” by Signora Pisaroni; and the finale, which is very remarkable and truly original, particularly the quintetto, Crudele sospetto,” which has great power and beauty.

In the second act, the parts that excited most admiration, were the terzetto “Alla ragion deh ceda!” the air “Ah! si pera,” and the Romance, which is sung behind the scenes, sotto voce, accompanied by a harp. The effect of this piece is much heightened by the subject of it having been heard, at intervals through nearly the half of the first act.

The play of the passions is much less lively in this opera than in the “Otello,” but the cantilenas are more beautiful. The song is in general more spianato, more sustained and simple; for example, in the delicious and tender air “Ma dov’è colei che accende?” It was the opinion of the dilettanti of Naples, that, in the “Donna del Lago,” Rossini had in some degree reverted to the style of his early youth, to the system according to which the “Demetrio” and the “Inganno felice’ are modelled. I here take occasion to observe, that the above operas, and particularly “Il Tancredi,” are written in a style that, to me at least, appears Rossini’s best manner. In them, a just proportion is observed between the harmony and the melody, and expression is never sacrificed to effect. Not that I mean to assert, that “Tancredi” presents the best possible ideas, and that it eclipses all the other merits of Rossini. He has since acquired more depth and energy; but many of his ideas are tinctured by a false system, that robs them of half their effect.

Rossini has devoted but little attention to sacred music; however, this year, we find him composing a grand mass at Naples. It took him three or four days to give the character of church music to some of his most beautiful motivos. The Neapolitans found it a delicious treat; they saw pass successively before their eyes, and under a little different form, all the sublime airs of their favourite composer. One of the priests exclaimed, in a serious tone,—" Rossini, if thou dost but knock at the gate of Paradise with this mass, in spite of all thy sins, St. Peter will not have the heart to refuse thee an entrance." This phrase is delicious in the Neapolitan dialect, on account of its grotesque energy.

CHAPTER XVI.

Blanca e Faliero"—" Maometto Secondo" — Unsuccessful—" Matilda di Shabran"—" Zelmira" — Rossini marries Signora Colbran — Goes to Vienna — Anecdote of his reception there — Sentiments of the Germans respecting Rossini — Rossini returns to Venice—"Maometto" hissed—" Semiramide" — Which is the most beautiful of Rossini's Operas? — Rossini in London — Hint to the manager of the King's Theatre.

We now find ourselves in the stormy period of Rossini's career, and behold him persecuted and persecuting. We see him taking daring liberties with a people the most sensitive upon earth, and who can be touched in no more tender part than that in which their pleasures are in question. We find him attempting, and sometimes succeeding, in deceiving the critical acumen of his countrymen, by passing off upon them his old music for new, and see him visited in return with outrage, and not unfrequently with injustice.

We saw Rossini quit Naples on the night of the 4th of October, amidst a storm of hisses; on the 26th of December following, we find him bringing out his "Bianca e Faliero" in the Scaln at Milan. It is nearly the same subject as that of Manzoni's tragedy of "Il Conte di Carmagnola." The scene is at Venice. The Council of Ten condemns to death a young general, whose successes have raised their distrust; but Faliero (such is the soldier's name) is beloved by Bianca, the daughter of the Doge. This part was admirably sustained by Madame Camporese, and that of Faliero by the Signora Carolina Bassi, a singer of great promise. The decoration, representing the interior of the Council of Ten, was reality itself. A general buzz of approbation ran round the house, at the sight of the magnificence of this immense and sombre hall, decorated with hangings of purple velvet, and lighted by a few scattered tapers in golden lustres. The costume of the Council was equally imposing; we felt ourselves in the presence of an all-powerful and inexorable despotism. Nothing can be a better commentary on dramatic music than splendid and appropriate decorations. They give a tone

to the imagination, and dispose it for entering upon the land of illusions. Nothing can be a better prologue to the music, than the soft buzz of delight that circulates round the interior of the Scala at the rising of the curtain, and the first display of such magnificent decorations.

As to the music, it was full of reminiscences, and its reception was so cold, as to amount to little short of a failure. The public appeared unusually severe; perhaps the strong situations of the "Gazza Ladra" were still fresh in their recollection, and this story appeared tame when contrasted with the former. It has been remarked, that the musician who has borne away laurels of triumph in his art, may be pardoned great faults, and daring violations of rules, — but he must not become feeble: thus, in a hero, we can forgive the loss of a battle, and overlook any grammatical faults in his despatches, but cannot pardon a disgraceful retreat. An air, which was very difficult, and sung with cold correctness by Madame Comporese, did not disarm the severity of the public. It was called the "Aria di garlanda," because Bianca, when singing it, holds a garland in her hand. This and a quartetto were the only new pieces in the opera. But the latter, as well as a movement for the clarinet, are among the divinest inspirations of music. I have no hesitation in declaring, that there is nothing in Rossini's works, perhaps not in modern music, comparable to this duet; it is an effort of genius of the highest order. It has all the tenderness, without the deep melancholy, of Mozart.

This piece had scarcely made its appearance, when it was introduced into a ballet, and performed at the same theatre. The same public that had listened to it for months together, were scarcely less delighted with it, in this second form; and the most perfect silence reigned during its performance.

Rossini returned to Naples, for the carnival of 1820, and produced there his "Maometto Secondo." The subject of this opera, like the greater part of those Rossini has been condemned to work upon, is made up of very poor materials, though the libretto is said to be from the pen of Il Duca di Ventignano, who passes at Naples for one of the best composers of tragedies in the kingdom. The "Introduzione" pleased much, and gave a more favourable augury of the opera than the sequel justified; for it was soon discovered that Rossini had again fallen into his besetting sin, of borrowing from himself without mercy. A hundred passages occurred, which were like the faded charms of a decayed beauty which once enchanted, but have since

lost all their magic, and every power of attraction. A terzetto, in the first act, called forth loud and merited applause; as did also a largo, in the finale, which is full of beauty; though, from the constant custom Rossini has of introducing such movements at the close of his first act, they assume rather a formal appearance. Some of the most striking effects of music are produced by surprise; but, with respect to these finales, all the world knows what is coming, and is taught, by degrees, to receive it as a matter of course.

The second act was defective in interest, and dragged considerably. In vain did Maometto's janissary bands strive with their noise to keep attention awake: it was all to no purpose. The only thing that excited interest was a farewell terzetto between the father, daughter, and rejected lover. Rossini appears particularly to excel in compositions of this class. The cold and obstinate silence which prevailed at the close of the opera, showed the feelings of a disappointed public, who were only prevented from expressing their unreserved disapprobation, by the presence of Rossini, and a respect for his name.

In the carnival of 1821, Rossini gave his "Matilda di Shabran," at the theatre D'Apollone, at Rome, which was built by the French, and is the only tolerable theatre in this city. This opera introduced to the public the pretty and favorite singer, Cattarina Lipparini. The opinion of the public was, that the libretto was execrable, but the music charming.

In the spring of 1822, Rossini returned to

Naples, and brought out his "Zelmira," which was sung at San-Carlo, by Signora Colbran, Nozzari, Davide, Ambrosi, Benedetti, and Signora Cecconi.

The libretto, which is from the pen of Tottola, is one of the most weak and insipid of all modern composition of that kind, and the plot full of perplexity. At the time of the composition of this opera, Rossini had accepted an engagement at Vienna, and it is more than probable that, in writing it, the composer had an eye to Germany, for it is quite in the style and taste of the German school. Yet it must be allowed to abound with many beauties, particularly a romance in the first act, which is full of tender and plaintive expression, and pregnant with profound feeling. A terzetto, also in the same

act, and a warlike march heard breaking upon the silence of a caverned scene in the second, are full of expression and true dramatic effect. A grand quartetto, towards the close, called down tumultuous applause: it abounds with passion, and sparkles with fancy.

Rossini also composed a pastorale for four voices, entitled “La Riconoscenza,” which was performed at San-Carlo, on the 27th of December, for his own benefit. It was sung by the Signoras Dardanelliy, and Cornelli, with Rubini, and Benedetti. Rossini quitted Naples the following morning, and departed for Bologna. On the 15th of the March following, he was married to Signora Colbran. The ceremony took place at Castenaso, near Bologna, where the lady has a little country seat. Meanwhile Davide, Nozzari, and Ambrogi, arrived from Naples, and a few days after they all started together to Vienna, where Rossini had accepted an engagement, and where he was to make his debut with “Zelmira.”

Many have been the remarks which this marriage has called forth. It is like the match of a man of genius — precisely the reverse of what was to be expected. Signora Colbran is a Spaniard by birth — she can no longer boast of beauty — is said to have lost her voice — is no longer young — and had devoted her early years to Signor Barbaja, the Neapolitan manager, of whom we have before spoken. Rossini is said to love money — she is rich, and this must have been the temptation. With the fortune he has acquired, and with the prospects before him, Rossini now bids fair to become one of the richest composers the world ever saw. The following distich appeared at Bologna, the day after the wedding, from the pen of some son of Pasquin:

“Eximia eximio est mulier sociata marito:

Venturum eximium quis neget inde genus?”

On the 30th of March, Rossini made his debut at Vienna, with the opera of “Cenerentola.”

"Zelmira" had been promised, but, as the former opera had already been adapted to German words, and performed at Vienna under the title of "Die Aschenbrôdel," Rossini wished to pay a compliment to the German taste, and expressed a wish that this opera should take the precedence, and be given by the German company. At the rehearsal, he desired the music to be performed in a quicker time than had usually been done, which, however, did not very well accord with the ponderous nature of the German language. When this inconvenience was pointed out to him, he replied, with the frankness and naïveté peculiar to him, that "the words with him were quite a secondary consideration; that the music and effect were every thing." — Who durst contradict him?

At length his promised "Zelmira" was produced. He attended to all the arrangements of the opera, but declined presiding at the piano, excusing himself with a well-turned compliment to the orchestra, by expressing his confidence that his music was perfectly safe in their hands, and did not require his interference. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm, with which this opera was received. Not only the master, but also the singers were called for at the close of the piece, to receive the congratulations of the audience.

The next opera that followed was "La Gazza ladra," the favorite overture to which was greeted with tumultuous applause, and, what was altogether new in the annals of theatrical usages, the maestro was called for, at the conclusion; nor was the opera allowed to proceed till he had made his appearance. The fact is, that on the first representation of this opera in Vienna, in 1819, this overture had been the cause of a musical war, in which numerous dissertations were printed on both sides. The "Gazza ladra" was followed by "Corradino,"

"Elisabetta," and "Ricciardo;'' but "Zelmira" remained the favorite opera, and held its course triumphantly through the whole season.

A German publication, of this period describes Rossini as a well-bred man, of agreeable manners, and very personable appearance, of great gaiety of character, and full of wit and humour. The societies into which he was introduced were charmed with his vivacity, joined to perfectly unassuming manners, which had nothing of the assumption of the master, or the pedantry of the school.

The Germans were, however, not a little astonished at the reputation, which Madame Colbran Rossini had contrived to make in Italy; her voice was feeble; some said it was tuneless, and the proud Senora, the queen of the San-Carlo, was in imminent danger of being hissed. But, by a rare contingency, tenderness for the husband saved the wife from being undone.

Among the other honours shown to Rossini, the following must not be omitted, which is strongly indicative of the excess to which a spirit of nationality may be carried. It was Madame Rossini's birth-day; and at the conclusion of the opera, the composer invited the principal singers to supper, to celebrate the festive occasion. Great hilarity prevailed, and the sparkling champagne circulated briskly. At last, a very unusual and increasing noise was heard in the street. The servants are ordered to see what was the matter, and they return with a report that a great concourse of people had assembled in front of the house, mostly consisting of the composer's countrymen, who were assembled to render him and his bride all "honours due." Rossini proposed to his guests to throw open the windows, and treat this music-loving mob with something to repay them for their zeal and devotion. Accordingly it was done. The piano was thrown open, and he accompanied his beloved Isabella in a scene from "Elisabetta." Cries of joy succeeded from below: Viva, viva! Sia benedetto! ancora, ancora! Davide and Madame Ekerlin next sung a duet, and afterwards Nozzari gave his sortit a (song on his first entrance) from "Zelmira," The delight of the amateurs on the trottoir knew no bounds. At last, when Madame Rossini gave the air "Caro, per te quest anima," enthusiasm was at its height. Mingled shouts arose of fora! fora il maestro! loud as the chorus of a thousand trombones. Rossini appears in the balcony, and makes his gracious obeisance to the assembled multitude. The air resounds with Viva, viva! Cantare, cantare! The good-natured maestro is obliged to comply, and trills, with all his might, his own "Figaro qua, Figaro la." Surely this was enough to satisfy the most unreasonable. By no means, — the mixed parterre would willingly, alla maniera Italiana, have prolonged this occasional concert till the morning dawn. Not so those above: after having toiled through a long opera, and thrown in a piccola Academia musicale gratis, as a kind of make-weight, they thought very properly that, as it was already past the hour when "spirits walk the earth," every good Christian had a right to look for wholesome repose.

Meanwhile, as the crowd below felt no disposition to disperse, it was judged proper to remove the supper things, and extinguish the lights, which done, the company retreated into a back apartment. The many-headed monster was not, however, to be so easily pacified. At first a sullen silence brooded around, but too ominous of the approaching storm; but, at the sight of the Egyptian darkness that reigned in the apartments, and announced the precipitate retreat of their favorite and his party, a dull murmur was heard to arise, which swelled by degrees into a tremendous crescendo, not unlike some of those of which this master is so fond of giving specimens in his works. At last, all was fury, tumult, storm, and execration; and, no doubt, the windows would have felt the effects of the general disappointment, if some of the guardians of the night, aided by a party of the police, who by this time had been apprised of the uproar, had not succeeded in dispersing these musical rioters.

Thus terminated an adventure, new to Vienna, but which is no unusual thing in Italy, where, if a composer is unsuccessful in a piece to-night, he is pursued to his home with hisses, hooting, and execration; while a few nights after, if he happens to please the mob by something to their taste, he is conducted home in procession, by the light of flambeaux, and amidst the crash of Janissary music. The writer of this has often been witness of such scenes, as well in Milan and Turin, as in Rome and Naples.

We now come to a period, in which we find insurrection in the pit, redoubled intrigue behind the scenes, tumult, scandal, a war of pamphlets, and diplomacy itself, called in to the aid of music. Rossini had entered into a contract with the impressario of the Fenice theatre in Venice. Six thousand francs were ensured to Signor Rossini, and four thousand to Madame Colbran Rossini, upon condition that he should bring out two operas during the Carnival; one old and one new, and Madame was to perform in both. All Venice waited for these operas with the utmost anxiety. “Zelmira,” performed at Naples, had long been promised, and the company at the Fenice was already occupied in rehearsing it, when the rival theatre of San Benedetto announced the representation of the same piece.

The two theatres immediately contested the right to this opera, and the disputes grew so high that the government interfered. A stormy contest ensued, at the close of which it was decided that San-Benedetto had the

legitimate right to “Zelmira;” and it was represented at this theatre, to the great detriment of the Fenice, which had been at considerable expense, and after all found its hopes frustrated.

Rossini was not allowed to remain neutral during this scene. He was assailed by the angry manager; and, to remedy an evil, which it appeared impossible not to impute, in some degree, to him, he proposed the representation of the “Maometto” which we have seen condemned at Naples, but whose fame he promised to re-establish by re-composing the whole second act. This promise given, he departed for Verona; remained there a considerable time; spent his leisure very agreeably among his friends and admirers, and wrote a cantata in honour of the Emperor of Austria, which was performed during the Congress: but not a note did he re-write of the promised second act. The manager’s indignation knew no bounds; the public, fearful of being disappointed of their pleasures, began to take an active part in the business; and the report was spread that Signora Colbran had lost her voice. Things did not wear a better aspect in the inside of the theatre: the rehearsals became scenes of discord. One day Galli, the celebrated bass, took an affront, and set off in the middle of the second act. Rossini, in disgust, broke up the meeting and withdrew. The manager appealed to the public authorities, and Rossini was placed under arrest.

Under all these terrible auspices the fatal day approached. An irritated public filled the theatre at an early hour; cries resounded from every side that the manager had re-produced an old condemned opera, and that Rossini had neglected to fulfil his engagements. The overture was hissed, the first scene hooted, and the second drowned by the impromptu accompaniments of the pit, whose discords, — if we may be pardoned a musical phrase, — no art could resolve. Silence could only be obtained when clamour and fury had howled themselves to rest, and were tired out by their exertions.

The enemies of Rossini had circulated a report through the house, — a report, by the way, that had but too much truth in it, — that Rossini had only altered one miserable trio, and had simply introduced some shreds of his other works; and towards the close of the opera an uproar arose, of which no image in nature could convey an adequate idea. Galli and Madame Colbran Rossini drank the bitter cup of humiliation to the lees. Poor Sinclair, our English tenor, partook of these attentions, and was overwhelmed with hisses

and outrages. From seven in the evening till three in the morning, this tempestuous scene endured, and fears were entertained for the safety of the scenery, and the decorations of the house.

Rossini endeavoured to make his peace with the Venetians the following Carnival, by calling his talents into action in the opera of "Semiramide," which was performed at the theatre della Fenice, and sung by madame Colbran Rossini, Rosa Mariami, a delightful contr'alto, Sinclair, Galli, and Lucio Mariani. A passage in the overture tended much to conciliate the audience, and obliterate the former unfavourable impression, and this feeling was strengthened by an air of Mariani's, which was full of beauty and sweetness. The next piece that called forth applause was a duet between this lady and Madame C. Rossini, besides which an air of Galli, and a terzetto between him and the two above-mentioned ladies, were received with tumultuous applause. Rossini was called for at the end of the second act, and came forward with a humble obeisance to receive this token of reconciliation.

Critics speak highly of the movement, with a chorus, that forms the finale of the first act; but, upon the whole, I cannot help thinking that, in this opera, Rossini has been guilty of an error in geography. What, as a whole, was coolly received at Venice, would have been hailed with enthusiasm at Konigsberg or Berlin. Rossini has been but little studious of delighting the lovers of the simple; we search in vain for those melodies so flattering to the ear, and so soothing to the heart:

"Il canto che nell'anima si sente."

Nothing is found more difficult than to answer the question: — Which is the most beautiful of Rossini's operas? As to which is to be preferred, the simplicity of the style of "Tancredi," or the luxuriancy and superabundant ornaments of "Ricciardo e Zoraida," changed into so many motivos; this is quite another question. What I now speak of, is the difficulty of forming a general opinion of their comparative merits; and whence can this difficulty arise?

In the overture of the "Barbiere' there is a very charming little passage. Very well: but then the same pretty passage has already served as a motivo in

“Tancredi,” and, still later, Rossini has found it very serviceable in his “Elisabetta.” In the last instance, he has given it in the shape of a duo, in which latter form it is more beautiful than in either of the two former. We may, therefore, think ourselves fortunate if we hear this charming passage, for the first time, under the form of a duo, though still we ought to regret the circumstance that threw it in our way. But, if already familiar to you in the

“Barbiere,” or “Tancredi,” ho wonder that in the form of a duo it should be found tiresome.

It would be amusing enough to see a correct list of all the pieces of music in Rossini’s works, that are really different from each other; as well as another list of the pieces founded on the same ideas, with a reference to the duet or air in which such ideas are employed in the happiest manner. In the circle of my acquaintance at Naples, I know twenty young men, capable of drawing out such a list in a couple of days, with as much ease as a critique would be got up in London on the eleventh Canto of Don Juan, or a profound article at Paris upon public credit. There are a hundred young men at Naples whom you meet in society, who, if it came to the point, could write you an opera like “Ser Marc Antonio,” or the “Barone di Dolsheim,” in six weeks at the farthest; the only difference is, that, instead of six weeks, these operas cost the maestri, who have received a regular education in the conservatoirs, only fifteen days.

I have heard my friends at Naples say, that nothing in the world would be more easy than to revive fifty chefs-d’œuvres of Paisiello and Cimarosa. The first thing is to wait till thev are completely forgotten; this may be safely reckoned upon in 1825. Of all the operas of Paisiello, La Scuffiara is the only one now played at Naples. Then let some happy and skilful manœuvrer, some retired master, who can no longer write any thing original on account of his health, and the exertion it requires, M. Pavesi for instance, take the “Pirro” of Paisiello, leave out the recitatives, enforce the accompaniment, and add new finales. The principal contrivance will be how to transform the most original piece in each act into a finale. Who knows but that, in following up such a path as this, we may stumble upon some of the most popular airs of our great living masters. What an affliction it would be to me, if in this manner they should happen to disinter the beautiful quartetto in “Bianca e Faliero!”

At the pass to which things have come, nothing would be of such essential service to Rossini as one or two decisive failures: it would teach him a humbling, but a useful, lesson. Unfortunately I know of no other place that is worthy of hissing him, but Milan or Naples; in any other place it would be rancour, and not dispassionate criticism.

After having received the homages of the lovers of music in Paris, Rossini has gone to fulfil his engagements in London. It has been remarked that, in this capital, Rossini, at a distance from the ordinary theatre of his glory, will have but too many facilities of passing off much of his old music for new; his natural failing will gain redoubled strength.

To stimulate him into energy, and into an attempt to be original, the impressario of the King's Theatre ought to propose to him to reset the libretti of "Il Don Giovanni," or the "Matrimonio Secreto." Let not his success in the "Barbiere di Seviglia" be forgotten, in the composition of which Rossini felt himself brought into competition with Paisiello.

CHAPTER XVII.

On Rossini's Style.

Before concluding, it will be proper to say a word on the peculiarities of Rossini's style.

Good music may be considered as nothing more than our emotion. The pleasure created by it seems to arise from its power of leading the imagination through a series of exquisite but evanescent illusions. These illusions are not calm and sublime, like those of sculpture, nor tender and pensive, like those of painting, as exhibited, for example, in the works of Corregio.

The chief characteristic of Rossini's music is an extraordinary rapidity, which does not permit the mind to indulge in those profound emotions and soothing reveries that the slow and sustained movements of Mozart are so calculated to awaken. Yet this velocity is accompanied by a sparkling freshness that calls up involuntary delight. Hence it is, that all other music appears heavy and wearisome after that of Rossini. Were Mozart to make his debut at the present day, such, in all probability, is the judgment that would be formed of his music. To be pleased, we must listen to his music for a fortnight together; but he would be hissed on the first day. If Mozart maintains his ground against Rossini, if we frequently prefer him, it is because he is strong in that antiquity which he has already attained by anticipation, and in our recollection of the pleasure we have derived from his works.

But, if the music of Rossini is never heavy, it is of a kind to weary oy long repetition. But this ever-varying brilliancy is perhaps the chief reason why his compositions leave no profound impressions behind them. They may be said, in the words of Shakspeare,

“To be too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;

Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

Ere one can say, it lightens.”

The most distinguished amateurs of Italy, who have been in the habit of hearing it for these dozen years, have for some time past begun to require novelty, and are crying out for some change.

If such be the case now, what will it be twenty years hence, when the “Barbiere” shall be as long known to the public as the “Matrimonio Secreto” or “Il Don Giovanni’’ is now?

The misfortune of Rossini is, that he treats the passion of love as a mere affair of gallantry. With him this passion is not love, but a continuous, brisk, and sparkling imitation of it. The consequence is, that he is never melancholy, and what is music without a shade of pensiveness? —

“I am never merry when I hear sweet music,”

— says that poet among the moderns, to whom, above all others, it was given to know the secrets of the passions, — the author of Cymbeline and Othello.

In this siecle expédétif, — this expediting age, — Rossini has at least one advantage, he never arrests our attention long together.

In a drama in which a composer endeavours to express human passions, and all the more delicate shades of feeling, a considerable degree of attention is necessary in order to feel the emotions which he wishes to produce. It is scarcely necessary to add, that even attention alone will not be sufficient, if the minds of the hearers be not susceptible of profound emotion. Now, on

the contrary, in the compositions of Rossini, the greater proportion of the airs and duets resemble short brilliant concertos for the display of the voice, rather than vehicles for the expression of sentiment; and, consequently, but a very slender degree of attention is required to derive pleasure from them; in most instances, the mind has little or nothing to do in the affair.

I know I shall be called upon to justify so bold an assertion. I therefore refer the amateur to that most perfect of operas, the "Matrimonio Secreto." In the first scene of the first act, Carolina is seen happy with her lover. She makes a tender reflection on the future bliss that awaitsthem: "Se amor si gode in pace." Simple as these words are, they have produced one of the most beautiful musical phrases that exists in the world. Rosina, in the "Barbiere di Seviglia," finding in the Count Almaviva a faithful lover, instead of the wretch who was to barter her into the arms of another; Rosina, in this moment of ecstasy, in one of the most affecting situations in which it is possible for the human mind to be placed, instead of yielding herself up to the impulse of impassioned tenderness, wanders into a thousand fioriture, a thousand unmeaning roulades and misplaced cadences. Rossini found he had not the power to be tender, and therefore he was determined to be surprising. Signora Bellochi, the first Rosina, had a powerful voice, and Rossini wrote this little ornamental concerto to set it off to the best advantage. But here is no excuse: the happiness in question is of a nature that cannot possibly be mistaken for mere joy. This is the principal defect of Rossini's second manner, when he adopted the unfortunate idea of writing all those embellishments in full, which should be left to the feeling and extemporaneous execution of the singer. It was thus that he fell into the error of converting an accessary into a principal. It cannot be denied that these ornamental passages possess much beauty, a seductive and enlivening freshness, and a rapidity that hurries the hearer agreeably along.

Viganô, whom Italy, till very lately, presented to the world as a proof that she was still the queen of the fine arts, adapted his pantomimical tragedies, called ballets, to Rossini's airs; for instance, Otello, La Vestale, Mirrha, &c. Vigano, having taken care to select only the most beautiful of his airs, the consequence unfortunately is, that, after seeing one of his ballets, the opera appears tame; and, to counteract this evil, the composer is obliged to be constantly endeavouring to produce new and striking effects. Nothing could

be imagined more ruinous than this to the native grace and simplicity of music.

Another unfortunate circumstance for Rossini is, that the semi-serious opera has come much into fashion, which has led him to adopt a kind of amphibious style, neither buffa nor seria. Every one in Italy agrees that the serious opera is dull, and, besides, it is a species of composition that requires the utmost perfection in the performance. One serious opera in the year, at the Scala or San-Carlo, is found to be sufficient. In the present deplorable state of Italy, it would afford some kind of relief to find cheerfulness at the theatre; and yet, as, by a singular regulation, the prices of admission to the semi-s'eria are higher than those of the buffa, the directors will bring forward nothing but the former. This is inauspicious for Rossini, whose genius is eminently fitted for the gay, the pleasurable, and the voluptuous.

The system of variations has often led Rossini to copy himself; like all thieves, he hoped to conceal his larceny. After all, why should not a poor maestro, who is obliged to compose an opera in six weeks, ill or well, in the vein or not, be allowed to have recourse to such an expedient in moments when inspiration "comes not, though invoked." Mayer, for instance, and others whom I could name, do not copy themselves, it is true, but they frequently chill us into apathy, which is invariably followed by "nature's kind restorer, balmy sleep." Rossini, on the contrary, allows us neither peace nor repose; we may get out of patience with his operas, but it is impossible to doze over them: be the impression altogether new, or only a pleasing reminiscence, still it is one pleasure followed by another. There is never any void, as in the first act of the "Rosa bianca," for example.

All the world acknowledges the fecundity of Rossini's imagination, and yet nothing is more common than the complaint that he repeats himself, that he copies himself, that he wants invention, &c. No doubt there is much truth in all this; but I would take the liberty of proposing the following questions.

1. How many principal pieces was it usual for former great masters to introduce in each of their works?

2. To how many of these pieces did the public pay attention?

3. Among these pieces, how many have survived, and became favorites beyond the walls of the Opera?

Paisiello saw, perhaps, some twenty or thirty principal pieces of his hundred and fifty operas meet with general favour. Rossini could easily reckon upon a hundred in his thirty operas, really different from each other. A simpleton, who sees a group of negroes for the first time, imagines that they all resemble one another: the pleasing airs of Rossini are negroes to the simpletons of our day.

The fault of the public is, that they wish to hear every thing at once; they wish to have their pennyworth for their penny, if I may be allowed the vulgar phrase: they expect every thing to be of equal force; it is necessary for them, that a tragedy should be entirely composed of passages of effect, like the "Qu'il mourût," of the Horaces, or the "Moi," of the Médée. Such unreasonable pretensions are in opposition to the very nature of the human heart. No man possessed of any sensibility for the fine arts, could find any pleasure in two sublime pieces following each other in immediate succession.

At the first opening of the scores of Rossini, it might be imagined that the difficulties presented in the execution of the songs, would allow them to have but a very limited numbers of interpreters: but it is soon discovered, that his music offers a multitude of means to please, which, even when executed with half the ornaments written by Rossini, or with the same embellishments differently arranged, has still the power to please. A singer of mediocre talents will, if but possessed of a certain degree of flexibility of voice, be able to execute the pieces of this master with success. The seductive nature of his cantilena, which is never hard nor violent through excess of force; the vivacity of the rhythm, and the sweetness of the accompaniments, produce of themselves such a feeling of pleasure, that, whatever modifications the singer may, through the deficiencies of his voice, be obliged to make in the ornaments of Rossini, his music, though thus mutilated, always produces a piquant and very agreeable effect. It was not so formerly, in the days of an Aprile and a Gabrielli; every possible latitude was then given by the master to the singer, and every opportunity was furnished him of displaying his talents. If a singer was of mediocre talents, and

possessed no other qualification to recommend him than that of mere flexibility of voice, he could not hope for success.

The truly beautiful in song began with Pistocchi, in 1680; his pupil Bernacchi made great improvements in 1720, but it was under Pacchiarotti, in 1778, that this art was brought to perfection.

These and subsequent great singers, for instance Aprile, Farinelli, Ansani, Babini, and Marchesi, were indebted for their glory to the system of the ancient composers, who, in certain parts of the opera, gave the singer only a canvass to work upon; and he, to be faithful to the motivo of the master, gave it with the utmost simplicity, and was content to introduce his ornaments in the last twenty bars of the piece. What is more, there was not one of these great singers to whom his contemporaries were not indebted for two or three admirable female singers. The history of a Gabrielli, a De' Amicis, a Banti, and a Mara, furnishes us with the names of the celebrated soprani from whom they learnt the secrets of their art. Many of the female singers of the present day, Signora Colbran, for instance, are indebted for their talents to Signor Velluti.

It was in the execution of passages of the largo and cantabile spianato kind, that the talents of these great singers shone forth conspicuous. Now these are precisely the kind of cantilenas that Rossini so sedulously banished from his operas, after he had vitiated his taste at Naples, and adopted what is called his second manner. Formerly a singer spent six or eight years in forming his voice for the perfect execution of the largo: the patience of Bernacchi is proverbial in the history of the art. But, since Rossini has become the arbiter of taste, no one ever thinks of singing the largo ill or well; and yet this is the song that touches the soul. The song of Rossini pleases the mind without ever wearying it; compared to it, the largo movement will appear languid and heavy. The talent required for singing a grand rondo of Rossini, that in the "Donna del Lago," for instance, is a hundred times less than that required for doing justice to a grand air of Sacchini.

The shades in the portamento di voce, the art of sustaining the voice, and spreading it equally over the whole surface of the canto legato, the art of taking the breath insensibly, and without breaking the long vocal period of the ancient airs, formerly constituted the most difficult and most essential

part of execution. The more or less brilliant flexibility of the organ was reserved for gorgheggi; in other words, was never employed in the merely luxuriant and ornamental, but in the tender and expressive. A cadenza of some twenty bars was always reserved, at the close of the air, for displaying the singer's powers of execution.

Even those among the most sincere of Rossini's friends have reproached him, and with reason, of having encroached upon the territory of song; of having diminished those means by which it was enabled to hold dominion over the heart, and of having deprived the singer of those opportunities for an extemporaneous display of his powers, which were so frequent in the days of Farinelli, a Pacchierotti, &c and which enabled them to work those wonders, which can only be effected by allowing due scope to the energies of the voice.

The revolution effected by Rossini, has been fatal to the originality of the singer. Of what avail is it to the artist, to lavish his labour in the fruitless task of rendering the public sensible, in the first place, to the individual and native qualities of his voice; and secondly, to the peculiar expression which this individual mode of feeling can impart to it? In the operas of Rossini and his imitators, they are condemned to the mortification of never finding a single opportunity of making the public acquainted with qualifications which it has cost the labour of years to attain. Besides, the habit of finding every thing invented, — every thing written in the music they are to sing, — tends to destroy all spirit of invention, and check every impulse of a creative fancy. All that composers demand now-a-days of the artist, is a mechanical and instrumental execution. The lasciate me fare (leave that to me) the usual phrase of Rossini to his singers, has come to such a pass, that the faculty is not even left them of filling up a simple point d'orgue; they find every thing ornamented after Rossini's particular manner.

To the great singer of a former period, was left the invention of the greater part of the ornaments of song, all that Pacchiarotti used to call "i vezzi melodici del canto (the melodial luxury of song.) When Crescentini sang the air "Ombra adorata! aspetta, — he gave such a shade of spontaneous feeling to the varied inflexions of his voice, as the impulse of the moment called forth; it appeared at the instant he was singing it, that such ought to be the sentiment of an impassioned lover, who is about to rejoin the object of his

affections. Velluti, on the contrary, in giving the same words, has another shade of feeling; he takes a different view of the subject; with him it is a melancholy and pensive reflexion on the common fate of the two lovers. No master, however transcendant his abilities, could ever succeed in painting those innumerable and delicately varied shades which form the perfection of Crescentini's manner, — shades that are infinitely diversified according to the state of the singer's voice, or the degree of illusion or of enthusiasm by which he is animated. A singer to attain perfection in singing must yield to the inspirations of the moment. A great singer is a being essentially nervous; this is quite the opposite temperament to that required for a player on the violin. In fine, it is impossible for a master to be acquainted with all the resources of a singer's voice, which can be known only to the possessor, who has spent twenty years of his life in forming it, and studying its powers. Let an ornament be executed, I do not say ill, but feebly and without spirit, and its charm is instantaneously destroyed. You were in heaven, and in an instant you find yourself in a box of the opera, — nay, what is worse, perhaps in the midst of a singing school.

Should chance present to Rossini an actress, young, handsome, full of soul and intelligence, who never in a single gesture departs from the most perfect simplicity, at the same time that she is faithful to all the forms of the beau-ideal; if to talents so extraordinary as an actress, Rossini were to find united a voice which every moment awakens recollections of the great singers of the good old school, a voice capable of giving effect to the most simple recitative, and which, in an air, has power to move the stoutest hearts; — should chance present such an actress to Rossini, we should, doubtless, see him shake off his habitual indolence, as if by miracle, and study, in good earnest, the voice of Madame Pasta. Inspired by her talents, he would feel the former ardour revive with which he first entered upon composition, and return to those simple, but expressive melodies, with which he first began his career of glory. After having heard her in the prayer of "Romeo e Guiglietta," that touchstone for the talents of a singer; after having observed the fine shades which she can impart to her poriamenta di voce, the power of her accentuation, the admirable skill with which she can unite and sustain a long musical period; I have no doubt but that he would consent to sacrifice to her a portion of his system, and consent to be more economical in the use of that multitude of little notes by which his cantilenas are overcharged.

Fully convinced of the feeling and good taste of Madame Pasta, of which she gives such unequivocal proofs in the fioriture of her song, and persuaded how much more certain the effect of that pleasure is which is produced by the native feeling and spontaneous invention of a singer, Rossini would doubtless leave the embellishments of his song to the genius and inspiration of this great singer.

Madame Pasta's voice is of very considerable compass. It extends from A, above the bass-cliff note, to C flat, and even to D sharp in Alt. She enjoys the rare advantage of being able to sing music set for a contr'alto as well as a soprano voice. Though possessed but of little or no science in music, I should not hesitate to declare that the true character of her voice is a mezzo-soprano. The master who wishes to do justice to her voice should set the general tenor of her airs according to this modification of its powers, and employ all the other resources of her beautiful treble en passant, and as occasion may require.

We have to notice another very remarkable peculiarity in Madame Pasta's voice; it is not all of the same metallo (metal or stamp) as the Italians term it, a peculiarity that is found to afford one of the most powerful means of expression of which a singer of ability can avail herself.

By the Italians, a voice of this kind is said to consist of many registers, that is, different qualities of sound in different parts of the scale. It is the same with certain musical instruments; the clarionet, for instance, has two registers, in which the lower sounds do not appear to belong to the same genus as the upper. When the aid of great art, and, above all, of great sensibility, is not called in to regulate the employment of these different registers of the vocal organ, they appear nothing else than inequalities, and produce a hardness of effect destructive of all musical pleasure. A Todi, a Pacchiarotti, and a great number of singers of the first order, have shown how these apparent disadvantages may be converted into real beauties, and made to produce powerful and original effects. The history of the art would even seem to prove, that a voice equally strong and unalterable in all the notes of its compass, is not the best calculated for the purposes of impassioned song. Such a voice can never produce those veiled, and, in some sort, stifled, sounds, which paint, with so much fire and truth, certain emotions of profound agitation and impassioned anguish.

It is through the astonishing facility with which Madame Pasta unites her voce di testa (head-voice), with that of her voce di pelto (breast-voice), that she is enabled to produce such a multitude of piquant and agreeable effects. To enliven the colouring of a phrase of melody, or, in an instant, to change the shade of the expression, she employs her falsetto even in the chords of the middle of her diapason, or alternates the notes of the falsetto with those of the breast. She can employ this artifice with the same facility both in the middle and in the upper tones of her breast-voice.

Again, Madame Pasta's voce di testa possesses a character altogether different from that of her voce di pelto; it is brilliant, rapid, pure, light, and of admirable flexibility. With this part of her voice, she can, in delcending, so smorzare il canto (diminish the song) as to render the ear doubtful whether it still hears a sound or not.

In the art displayed in this delightful modification of voice, Madame Pasta makes daily advances towards perfection. In this manner, she is enabled to impart a new musical colouring to the sentiment, not by the accent of the words, and in quality of a great tragedian, but by the ever-varying shades of the voice, and in quality of a great singer.

Moderate in the use of embellishments, Madame Pasta never employs them but to heighten the force of the expression; and, what is more, her embellishments last only just so long as they are found to be useful. In her singing, I have never met with any of those ornaments which, like eternal gossips, who think they have never said enough, weary the patience of the hearer, and lead the singer from her subject. I leave it to the public to name, even among certain singers reputed great, who often run into this fault, and sometimes in a manner altogether amusing to those who are not too provoked to laugh. I have no wish to disturb the pleasures of those demi-connoisseurs by whom these amusing things are applauded with such transport. The failing of the singer, and the applauses of the hearers, spring from the same source — a want of soul. There is no better test for discovering an amateur of an acquired taste. When I see such unmeaning ornaments applauded to the skies, it reminds me of the anecdote of a certain well-known nobleman, who was closeted with a certain great king on important political business. The nobleman held a paper in his hand, and was running on with a long rigmarole upon a subject by no means amusing; the

good king, however, was very merry over the matter: the fact is, that he saw the noble peer was holding the paper the wrong side upwards. The gift of reading is not given to all the world.

With Madame Pasta, the same note in two different situations can hardly be called the same note. In this one word, is summed up the whole secret of the sublime art of singing. I have witnessed twenty representations of "Tancredi," and yet the voice of the singer followed so closely the inspirations that breathed spontaneously from her heart, that it could never be said to be exactly twice alike. These shades of feeling, varied at every repetition of the same character, are the infinitely little, which no master can reach by mere notation; and, should he try to write it, as Rossini has done since his journey to Naples in 1815, it would be found that such and such a grace, such and such an ornament, would not have suited the individual state of this singer's feelings on such and such an evening; therefore, it is impossible she could have excited such transports of delight in executing that particular ornament on the evening in question.

The vulgar herd of amateurs are not pleased with a passage unless given with the customary ornament, be such ornament executed well or ill. To such persons I have no excuse to offer for my enthusiasm. It would take me many pages to note down all the creations of Madame Pasta. What I understand by creations is certain means of expression, of which it is more than probable that the master who wrote the notes never once dreamed. As, in love, a language is oft times spoken which would be scarcely intelligible if coldly committed to paper, because

"Thought meets though ere from the lips it part;"

I imagine the same thing takes place with respect to song.

Like all voices, that of Madame Pasta meets, from time to time, with certain inconvenient positions, which it finds a difficulty in surmounting. These occasions are rare, but they serve to make us long still more to hear her, for once at least, in an opera written expressly for her voice. How great a treat such would an opera be from the pen of Rossini, could he but bring himself

to write conscientiously for such talents! I think this singer destined to make the fortune of any composer, who, in consulting her powers, would also be consulting his own fame. Perhaps the star of Rossini himself might be destined to grow pale before such a composer. She is sublime in the simple style, and this is the side on which the glory of the author of “Zelmira” must be attacked.

Those bigoted dilettanti, who have sprung up during the reign of Rossini, or, if I may so say it, are sons of the revolution which he has caused, will pardon me for having dwelt thus long upon the advantages which expression, or, in other words, which the pleasure of the spectator, would gain, from a due degree of respect shown to the rights of the singer. There is not less diversity in the human voice, than in the human countenance; and, great as this diversity is in voices when speaking, it becomes a hundred times more striking in the voice when singing. In the system of Rossini, this variety, this surprising diversity, of shades is not allowed to appear. All his voices are made, more or less, to sing the same music; hence the art must necessarily be impoverished.

From the restrictions thus laid upon the artist, arises the custom so common in Italy, for singers to travel with a collection of what are termed arie di baule (baggage-airs.) Even Crivelli and Velluti are not above adopting this practice, and never travel, of late, without the “Isolina” of Morlachi, an opera which they give everywhere. Whatever opera these singers have to perform in, they always discover the secret of introducing their arie di baule, which are subjects of everlasting pleasantry in the Italian theatres. By this expedient singers are enabled to escape from the trammels of a particular system, and attain the great end of all the arts — that of imparting pleasure.

This system of the arie di baule is, after all, a happy invention, not only with regard to mediocrity of talent in a difficult art, but also with respect to the limited resources of many small towns of Italy, which, in spite of the poverty of their musical budget, are enabled, by means of these airs, to get up two or three very tolerable operas every year. For example, in October 1822, I heard a very charming opera, at Varése, a town in Lombardy, not larger than Saint-Cloud, and whose inhabitants are remarkably obliging towards strangers.

Yet, whatever system Rossini may have adopted, still through the force of genius, imagination, and rapidity of manner, he never becomes tiresome. The misfortune is, that circumstances have obliged him to write for particular voices, and some of those voices in their decline. The consequence is, that his music is, for the greater part, a tissue of ornaments, which were very well in the persons for whose peculiarities of voice they were written; but what is their effect in another theatre, and under other circumstances? An attempt to execute them through the medium of singers, whose voices want the necessary capabilities, brings us to that state of mediocrity, which is intolerable in the fine arts in general, but particularly in music.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Opinions and Character of Rossini.

Rossini adores Cimarosa, he speaks of him with tears in his eyes.

The man he respects the most as a learned composer, is M. Cherubini, of Paris. What might not this great man have accomplished, if, in his fondness for German harmony, he had not lost all love, or rather all sensibility, for the melody of his country?

Rossini was known to have expressed his alarm at the popularity of Mayer. Mayer, in return for this proof of esteem, testifies the highest regard for his young rival, and this with all the honest open-heartedness natural to a Bavarian. Rossini entertains a very high opinion of M. Pavesi, who has written pieces of considerable power. I have heard him sincerely lament the misfortune of this composer, who, though in the flower of his youth, is obliged to remain inactive, through an ill state of health.

I have heard the author of the “Barbiere” declare it as his opinion that, after Fioravanti, nothing further could be done in that kind of buffa style, which is called nota e parola. He added, that nothing in the world was more absurd, than to attempt any thing new in buffa music, after the perfection to which it had been carried by Paisiello, Cimarosa, and Guglielmi. Men have changed too little since the time of Guglielmi, continued he, to render it possible that a new kind of beau idéal could be received by them: half a century must elapse before this can be effected, in order that the new exigencies of a fresh race of men may dispose them to receive it. I saw him maintain a furious contest on this point with a pedant of Berlin, who thought he should gain the day, by opposing the phrases of Kant, to the sentiments of a man of genius.

It would be well if, on this point, the critics of the north would re-consider the subject more attentively, before they condemn the gaiety of the southern

music, and look with a supercilious air upon a playfulness that appears to them little less than childish buffoonery. If they are insensible to the effect of such airs as “Signor si, lo genio e bello!” of the pedant in the “Scuffiara’ of Paisiello, or the “Amicone del mio core” of Cimarosa; at least, would it not be prudent and philosophic to be silent on the subject? Let the north occupy itself with Bible Societies, and plans of utility and wealth. Let an English peer, rolling amidst his millions, pass a whole day in gravely debating with his steward upon a reduction of five-and-twenty per cent., in the rents of his numerous farmers. The poor Italian, who sees his chains riveted, and the tyranny which he endures redoubled by the influence of those pious and humane souls, knows what he ought to think of so much virtue. He enjoys the arts: he knows how to relish the beautiful, under all its various forms; and, in this respect, nature has been bounteous to him, even to profusion — he regards the melancholy man of the north with more of pity than of hatred. “What would you have?” said one of the most amiable of the inhabitants of Venice to me, hanging his head in dejection; these grave and pious people lord it over eight hundred thousand barbarians, who prefer our climate to their snows.

Our sole revenge is to see these good people dying with ennui.”

Rossini has the highest veneration for the talents of Mozart, but, like the rest of his countrymen, considers him rather in the light of an incomparable symphonist than of an operatic composer. Whenever they speak of him, it is as one of the greatest men that ever existed; but, even in his “Don Giovanni,” they find the defects of the German school, that is, too little song for the voice, and too much for the clarinet and basoon.

I have heard Rossini speak in a very serious tone — which is not saying a little for him — of poor Orgitano. He declared that he was the only rising genius, of whose talents he should really have stood in awe. The world fondly looked forward to this amiable young man, as a successor to Cimarosa, when, in 1800, he was cut off in the flower of his youth, a new example of the danger of premature genius.

As for Paisiello, Rossini speaks of him as the most inimitable of men. He was a genius of that simple and natural order, whose manner almost defies imitation. Paisiello was able to produce the most astonishing effects, with

the greatest possible simplicity of melody, harmony, and accompaniment. Rossini was accustomed to say, that, after Paisiello, nothing more could be done in simple melody. After musing for an hour, we find we have stumbled upon Paisiello, and copied him even before we are aware of it. Rossini is well read in music; he can discourse learnedly on the works of every master. He has but to play a score once over upon the piano, to know it entirely by heart. He is therefore familiar with all the music written before his time, and yet no other than clean white music-paper is to be seen in his chamber.

Nothing can be more agreeable than the conversation of Rossini, at least to an Italian taste. He has a mind all fire and vivacity, starting from subject to subject, and viewing every thing in a strong, though frequently, grotesque point of view. A manner so rapid and discursive would be more astonishing than agreeable, were it not enlivened with a fund of anecdote. The everlasting restlessness of his career during twelve years, composed, as he himself has expressed it, of eternal goings and comings; his constant intercourse with singers — the most gay and thoughtless of beings, as well as his continual introductions into high and elegant society, has afforded him abundant opportunities of seeing life in all its shades and varieties. The envious and splenetic would sometimes spoil the pleasure of society, by calling in question the truth of some of his assertions. His reply was; “What a fool should I be to invent and be guilty of fibbing! I, who have been all my life among singers and actresses! All the world knows their caprices, and the greater the name I contrived to gain, the greater the caprices I had to undergo. I have seen in my chamber, and should have seen even in my anti-chamber, if I had had one, the greater part of the rich amateurs of Italy, who generally end by falling in love with the prima donna, and by being drawn into a still worse scrape, in undertaking the management of the theatre. They say I have been honoured by the smiles of beauty; it may be so, but I have had to suffer great mortifications in return. I have been used to change my place of abode, and the list of my friends, three times every year, during my whole life; and, thanks to my name, I have, in every place I visited, been honoured with the notice of all whose notice was worth any thing, and have been upon intimate terms with them four-and-twenty hours after my arrival!”

Rossini has the misfortune of not respecting any thing but genius. He never compromises any thing, he never waives his joke: so much the worse for the unhappy object of it. And yet his joke is never a malicious one; he is himself

the first to laugh heartily at it, and smooth down its asperity. Being invited to the house of a certain cardinal at Rome, he was asked to sing, but a caudatario (a train-bearer) first of all waits upon him, to request he would sing as little as possible on love subjects. He immediately began to sing all sorts of polissonneries, in the Bolognese dialect, which nobody understood, then burst into a hearty laugh and changed his theme. Without this fertility and quickness of mind, he never would have been able to write all the works he has done. Recollect that he has always lived up to his little means; that he would have his amusements, cost what they might. The consequence is, that he has been always poor, and had nothing to spare to obtain any aid in his compositions, and that nevertheless, before the age of two-and-thirty, he has produced five-and-forty operas and cantatas.

Rossini has a wonderful talent for mimicking all who come in his way. He is in the habit of calling forth shouts of merriment, by imitating the manners and gestures of such of his friends as are remarkable for any simplicity or peculiarity. Vestris, the first comic actor of Italy, and perhaps of the world, says that he would have been sure of great success if he had taken to the stage. Rossini can mimic De'Marini to a wonder, who is considered as the first actor in Italy: in witnessing it, one begins by laughing at the imitation, and finishes by being moved at the truth of the resemblance. In 1820, Rossini took a part in a comedy bourgeois, which was got up by several young persons of the first distinction. De' Marini was among the number of the spectators, and confessed, as did every one else, that Rossini performed his part to a wonder.

He is also a composer of verses, many of which have been inserted in the libretti, and he has frequently furnished the poet with many useful hints, both with regard to sentiment and situation. He is full of his drollery, even when he himself is the subject. When he has finished an air, he will declaim it before the friends that surround his piano, in all the burlesque of passion, adapting to it ridiculous verses composed on the spur of the moment. He then bursts into a hearty laugh: "E peró, in due anni questo si canter a da Barcelona à Pietroburgo: gran trionfo della musica! (and yet, in two years, this will be sung from Barcelona to St. Petersburg: a great triumph this for music.) When a friend was reckoning the number of theatres on which his operas were performing at the same moment, and enumerated seventeen in Italy, and seven out of Italy, — London, Vienna, Berlin, Lisbon, Barcelona,

&c. Rossini exclaimed; “Sono il piú giovine e il piú fortunalo di maestri” (I am the youngest and the most fortunate of composers).

Rossini’s facility in composing is not one of his least extraordinary qualities. We have seen many instances of this during the course of these memoirs, and Ricordi, the principal music-seller of Italy, and wh6 has made a large fortune by the sale of this composer’s works, has said that some of the finest airs of the “Gazza ladra,” were composed in the space of an hour, in the room at the back of his shop, in the midst of twelve or thirteen music-copiers, some of whom were dictating aloud to others the music which they had to note.

Rossini has been wise enough to meddle but little in politics. He steered his course with great prudence and caution through the stormy period of 1814 and 1815. Yet, wary as he appears to have generally been, he was once so far thrown off his guard as to compose a Patriotic Hymn, the tone and temper of which is altogether of the liberal cast. This ebullition of Transalpine feeling seems to have been forgotten or overlooked under the new state of things. It was not so, as we have already had occasion to remark, with poor Cimarosa. A few years before, he had, for a similar offence, been thrown into prison, and exposed to a variety of annoyances and persecutions.

Before his marriage with Signora Colbrun, who is said to have brought him an income of twenty thousand livres, Rossini never bought but two suits of clothes a-year. As for the rest, he had the good fortune never to think of prudence; indeed, what would be prudence in a man like him but a fear of falling off in his abilities? This feeling is only for the feeble minded and the poor in spirit. Rossini, secure in the resources of his genius, lived from day to day, without ever thinking of the morrow. Poverty was no affliction to him; give him but a piano and a simpleton to throw off his jokes upon, and he was happy. Wherever he appeared, whether in the dirty parlour of a common inn, or in the drawing-room of a prince, the name of Rossini was sufficient to attract all eyes; the first place was always given up to him, or, rather, that which he occupied became the first. He saw himself as much an object of attention, as the great man who could afford to spend his hundred thousand francs per annum.

To conclude, an attentive observation of Rossini's manner shows that nature had gifted him with a genius for music of the mezzo earattere. Ill-luck threw him in the way of Signora Col bran, the queen of the San-Carlo; and, what is still worse the same ill-luck so ordered it, that he fell in love with her. Had it been his good fortune to meet with some buffa singer, Signora Gafforini, for instance, in the flower of her youth and the pride of her talents, instead of tormenting us with the plagues of Egypt, he would have continued to write more operas in the style of "La Pietra del Paragone," and the "Italiana in Algeri." But let us not be unjust towards a great man; let us learn to set adue estimate on his genius whatever may have been the restraints imposed upon his talents by his own passions, the peculiarity of his situation, or the bad taste of his contemporaries. Do we esteem Corregio less, because he was condemned by the barbarous taste of the canons of his time to paint cupolas, or to astonish by gigantic figures wonderfully fore-shortened, di sotto in su?

Lively, light, piquant, never dull, seldom sublime, Rossini seems expressly constituted to throw into extacies persons of moderate powers and second-rate talents. Far as he is surpassed by Mozart, in tender and melancholy expression, and by Cimarosa in the comic and impassioned style, he still remains unrivalled for vivacity, rapidity, piquancy, and all the effects derived from these qualities. Never was an opera buff a written like "La Pietra del Paragone;" never was an opera seria written like "Otello' or "La Donna del Lago."

"Otello" bears no more resemblance to the "Oracj," than it does to "Il Don Giovanni." It is a work of a distinct and individual character. Rossini has a hundred times painted the pleasures of successful love; and, in the duet of "Armida," in a manner never before known. Sometimes he has been absurd, but he has never shewn a want of mind, not even in the air at the end of "La Gazza ladra." Equally incapable of writing without faults, and without a great display of genius, Rossini is certainly, since the death of Canova, the first of living artists. What rank will be assigned him by posterity? — This is a question I am unable to answer.

A judicious critic has remarked, that Rossini has already written too much; or, rather, has written too fast: he has exhausted his powers, or anticipated his strength, and ought now to remain fallow for a time. His genius is

unquestionably great; but he has been as much over-extolled by his friends, as underrated by his enemies.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE WORKS OF GIOACCHINO ROSSINI, BORN, AT PESARO, The 29th of FEBRUARY, 1792.

IN the month of August, 1808, Rossini composed, al the Lyceum of Bologna, a symphony, and a cantata, entitled “Il pianto d’Armonia.”

1. “DEMETRIO E POLIBIO.” This is Rossini’s first opera. It is said to have been written in the spring of 1809, though not performed till 1812, at the theatre Valle, in Rome. It was sung by the tenor Mombelli, and his two daughters, Marianna (now Madame Lambertini,) and Esther, who is still a celebrated singer, and engaged the present season (1823) at the King’s Theatre.

2. “LA Cambiale di Matrimonio,” 1810,farza: (by farza is understood an opera in one act,) written at Venice for the stagione del’ autunno This was the first of Rossini’s operas performed on any stage. It was produced at San-Mosè.

1. “L’Equivoco Stravagante, 1811, Autunno. Composed at Bologna, for the theatre del Corso.

2. “L’INGANNO FELICE,” 1812, Carnivale. Written for the theatre San-Mosè, at Venice. This is the only one of Rossini’s early works that has retained its place on the stage. It contains a terzetto that has been much celebrated.

3. “La Scala di Seta.” farza, 1812, Primavera. Performed in the San-Mosè, at Venice.

4. “La Pietra del Paragone,” 1812, Autunno, at the Scala, in Milan. In this opera, Signora Marcolini made her first appearance.

5. “L’OCCASIONE FA IL LADRO,” farza, 1812, Autunno, in the theatre San-Mosè, at Venice.

6. “Il Figlio per Azzardo,” farza, 1813, Carnivale: at the same theatre.

7. “Il TANCREDI,”1813, Carnivale: at the grand theatre della Fenice, at Venice. An opera seria, the first of the kind written by Rossini, with the exception of “Demetrio e Polibio,” which was only performed by the Mom belli family.

8. “L’Italiana in Algeri,” 1813, estate. Performed at the theatre San-Benedetto, at Venice.

9. “AURELIANO IN PALMIRA,” 1814, Carnivale. Sung in the theatre of La Scala, at Milan. The first act is set much higher than the second. The reason of this is, that Rossini had proceeded thus far when Davide fell ill with the small-pox, and was prevented from singing; the second act was written for Luigi Mari. The company by which this opera was sung was one of the most remarkable that has been known for many years. Villuti obtains great success. The opera experiences a failure: Rossini’s pride is hurt, and he thinks of changing his style.

10. “IL TURCO IN ITALIA,” 1814, Autunno: at the theatre of La Scala, at Milan. Obtains but a moderate success.

11. “SIGISMONDO,” 1814. In the theatre della Fenice, at Venice.

12. “ELISABETTA,” 1815, Autumno; Naples. Sung at San-Carlo, by the Signora Colbran, Signora Dardanelli, Nozzari, and Garcia. This was the debut of Rossini at Naples.

13. “TORVALDO E DORLISCA,” 1816, Carnivale: in the theatre Valle, at Rome. Obtains but little success.

14. “IL Barbiere di Seviglia,” the same season: at the theatre Argentina, in the same city.

15. “LA GAZZETTA,” 1816, estate. Performed at the theatre dei Fiorentini, at Naples.

16. “L’OTELLO,” 1816, inverno. Sung in the theatre del Fondo, (a handsome round theatre, which is subsidiary to that of San-Carlo,) by Signora Colbran, Nozzari, Davide, and the bass, Benedetti.

17. “LA Cenerentola,” 1817, Carnivale. Performed in the theatre Valli, at Rome.

18. “LA GAZZA LADRA,” 1817, Primavera, Milan.

Sung in the Scala, by Madame Bellochi, Monelli, Galli, and Signora Galianis.

19. “ARMIDA,” 1817, Autunno, Naples. Sung, at the theatre San-Carlo, by Signora Colbran, Nozzari, and Benedetto. Contains a celebrate d duet.

20. “ADELAIDE DI BORGOGNA,” 1818, Carnivale, Rome. Performed in the theatre Argentina.

21. “ADINA, OSSIA IL CALIFFO DI BAGDAD.” Rossini composed this piece for the opera at Lisbon, where it was performed in the theatre San-Carlo.

22. “MOSE IN EGITTO,” 1818, Naples. Sung, during Lent, in the theatre San-Carlo, by Signora Colbran, Nozzari, and Porto, whose powerful bass voice is displayed to great effect in the part of Pharoah.

23. “RICCIARDO E ZORAIDE,” 1818, Naples: and sung, during the Autunno, at San-Carlo.

24. “ERMIONE,” 1819, Naples. Sung, during the Lent season, at San-Carlo. The libretto is an imitation of the Andromaque of Racine. Rossini aimed at an imitation of the style of Gluck. The only prominent sentiment of this opera is anger. Obtains but a very moderate success.

25. “ODOARDO E CRISTINA,’ 1819, Primavera, Venice. Sung, at the theatre San-Benedetto, by Rosa Morandi, Carolina Cortesi (one of the prettiest actresses who has appeared on the stage for many years,) and the two Bianchi.

26. “LA DONNA DEL LAGO,” 4th October, 1819, Naples. Sung, in the theatre San-Carlo, by Signora Colbran, Signora Pisaroni (a charming voice, but one of the least handsome figures that can be imagined,) Nozzari, Davide, and Benedetti.

29. “BIANCA E FALIERO,” 1820, Carnivale, Milan. Sung, at the Scala, by Carolina Bassi (the only singer whose voice resembles that of Madame Pasta), Camporese, Bonaldi, and Alex, de Angelis.

SO. “MAOMETTO SECONDO,” 1820, Carnivale, Naples: at the theatre San-Carlo.

31. “MATILDA DI SHABRAN,” 1821, Carnivale, Rome: at the theatre D’Apollone.

32. “ZELMIRA,” 1822, Naples, inverno. Sung, at the theatre San-Carlo, by Signora Colbran, Nozzari, Davide, Ambrosi, Benedetti, and Signora Cecconi.

33. “SEMIRAMiDE,” 1823, Carnivale, at the grand theatre della Fenice. This opera was in the German style, and sung by Signora Colbran Rossini, Rosa Mariani, an excellent contr’alto, Sinclair (the English tenor,) Galli, and Mariani.

Rossini has devoted but little attention to sacred compositions; we know of no others than the two following:

1. “CIRO IN BABILONIA,” an oratorio, 1812. Composed at Ferrara, for the Lent season, and performed, at the Teatro Communale, by Signora Marcolini, Elisabetta Manfredini, and Signora Bianchi.

2. “A GRAND MASS,” composed, in 1819, at Naples.

Rossini has composed many cantatas, but I know of no others than the nine following:

1. “Il PIANTO D’ARMONIA,” 1808; performed in the Lyceum of Bologna. This is Rossini’s first attempt. The style resembles the weaker parts of “L’Inganno Felice.”

2. “DIDONE ABBANDONATA written for Signora Esther Mombelli, in 1811.

3. “EGLO E IRENE,” 1814; composed at Milan for Madame Principessa Belgiojoso, one of the amiable protectresses of Rossini.

4. “TETI E PELEO,” 1816; composed for the occasion of the nuptials of her R. H. the Duchess of Berri. Sung, at the theatre del Fonda, at Naples, by Signora Colbran, Giroloma Dardanelli, Margherita Chambraud, Nozzari, and Davide.

5. “A CANTATA” for a single voice; composed in honour of his Majesty the King of Naples, and sung by Signora Colbran, at San-Carlo, the 20th Feb. 1819.

6. “A CANTATA;” performed before his Majesty Francis I. Emperor of Austria, the 9th of May, 1819, when this prince appeared for the first time at the theatre San-Carlo. It was sung by Signora Colbran, Davide, and Rubini.

7. “A PATRIOTIC HYMN;” composed at Naples, in 1820. Another Hymn, of the same kind, but of very opposite politics, composed at Bologna, in 1815. For the same offence Cimarosa had, a few years before, been thrown into prison.

8. “LA RICONOSCENZA,” a pastorale for four voices, performed at San-Carlo, the 27th December, 1821, — for Rossini’s benefit.

9. “IL vero Omaggio,” a cantata, executed at Verona, during the Congress, in honour of his Majesty the Emperor of Austria. It was sung at the theatre degli Filarmonici, by Signora Tosi, a young and beautiful singer, the daughter of a celebrated advocate at Milan, and by Velluti, Crivelli, Galli, and Campitelli.

FINIS.

The Biography

Stendhal, 1835

BRIEF LIFE OF STENDHAL by Philip Sidney Woolf

Henry Beyle, who wrote under the name of Stendhal, was born at Grenoble in 1783, and was educated in his native town. In 1799 he came to Paris and was placed there under the protection of Daru, an important officer under Napoleon, a relative and patron of his family. But he showed no fitness for the various kinds of office work to which he was put. He tried his hand at this time, unsuccessfully also, at painting.

In 1800, still under the protection of Daru, he went to Italy, and, having obtained a commission in the 6th regiment of Dragoons, had his first experience of active service. By 1802 he had distinguished himself as a soldier, and it was to the general surprise of all who knew him, that he returned to France on leave, handed in his papers and returned to Grenoble.

He soon returned to Paris, there to begin serious study. But in 1806, he was once more with Daru and the army, — present at the triumphal entry of Napoleon into Berlin. It was directly after this that he was sent to Brunswick as assistant commissaire des guerres.

He left Brunswick in 1809, but after a flying visit to Paris, he was again given official employment in Germany. He was with the army at Vienna. After the peace of Schoenbrunn he returned once more to Paris in 1810.

In 1812, he saw service once more — taking an active and distinguished part in the Russian campaign of that year. He was complimented by Napoleon on the way he had discharged his duties in the commissariat. He witnessed the burning of Moscow and shared in the horrors and hardships of the retreat.

In 1813 his duties brought him to Segan in Silesia, and in 1814 to his native town of Grenoble.

The fall of Napoleon in the same year deprived him of his position and prospects. He went to Milan and stayed there with little interruption till 1821; only leaving after these, the happiest, years of his life, through fear of being implicated in the Carbonari troubles.

In 1830, he was appointed to the consulate of Trieste; but Metternich, who, no doubt, mistrusted his liberal tendencies, refused to ratify his appointment, and he was transferred to Civita Vecchia. This unhealthy district tried his health, and frequent travel did not succeed in repairing it.

In 1841, he was on leave in Paris, where he died suddenly in the following year.

Stendhal's best-known books are his two novels: La Chartreuse de Parme and Le Rouge et le Noir. Besides these there are his works of travel — Promenades dans Rome and Rome, Florence et Naples; Mémoire d'un Touriste; his history of Italian painting; his lives of Haydn, Mozart and Rossini; l'Abbesse de Castro and other minor works of fiction; finally a number of autobiographical works, of which La Vie de Henri Brulard, begun in his fiftieth year and left incomplete, is the most important.

But De l'Amour, Stendhal himself considered his most important work; it was written, as he tells us, in his happy years in Lombardy. It was published on his return to Paris in 1822, but it had no success, and copies of this edition are very rare. Recently it has been reprinted by Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons (in Chef d'Œuvres de la Littérature Française, London and Paris, 1912). The second edition (1833) had no more success than the first and is equally difficult to find. Stendhal was preparing a third edition for the press when he died in 1842. In 1853 the work made a new appearance in the edition of Stendhal's works published by Michel-Lévy, since reprinted by Calmann-Lévy. It contains certain additions, some of which Stendhal probably intended for the new edition, which he was planning at the time of his death.

Within the last year have appeared the first volumes of a new French edition of Stendhal's works, published by Messrs. Honoré and Edouard Champion of Paris.

It will be the most complete edition of Stendhal's works yet published and is the surest evidence that Stendhal's position in French literature is now assured. The volume containing De l'Amour has not yet appeared.

The basis of this translation is the first edition, to which we have only added three prefaces, written by Stendhal at various, subsequent dates and all well worth perusal. Apart from these, we have preferred to leave the book just as it appeared in the two editions, which were published in Stendhal's own lifetime.

Montmartre Cemetery, Paris, France — Stendhal's final resting place

Stendhal's grave